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# Psychedelia, the Summer of Love, & Monterey-The Rock Culture of 1967

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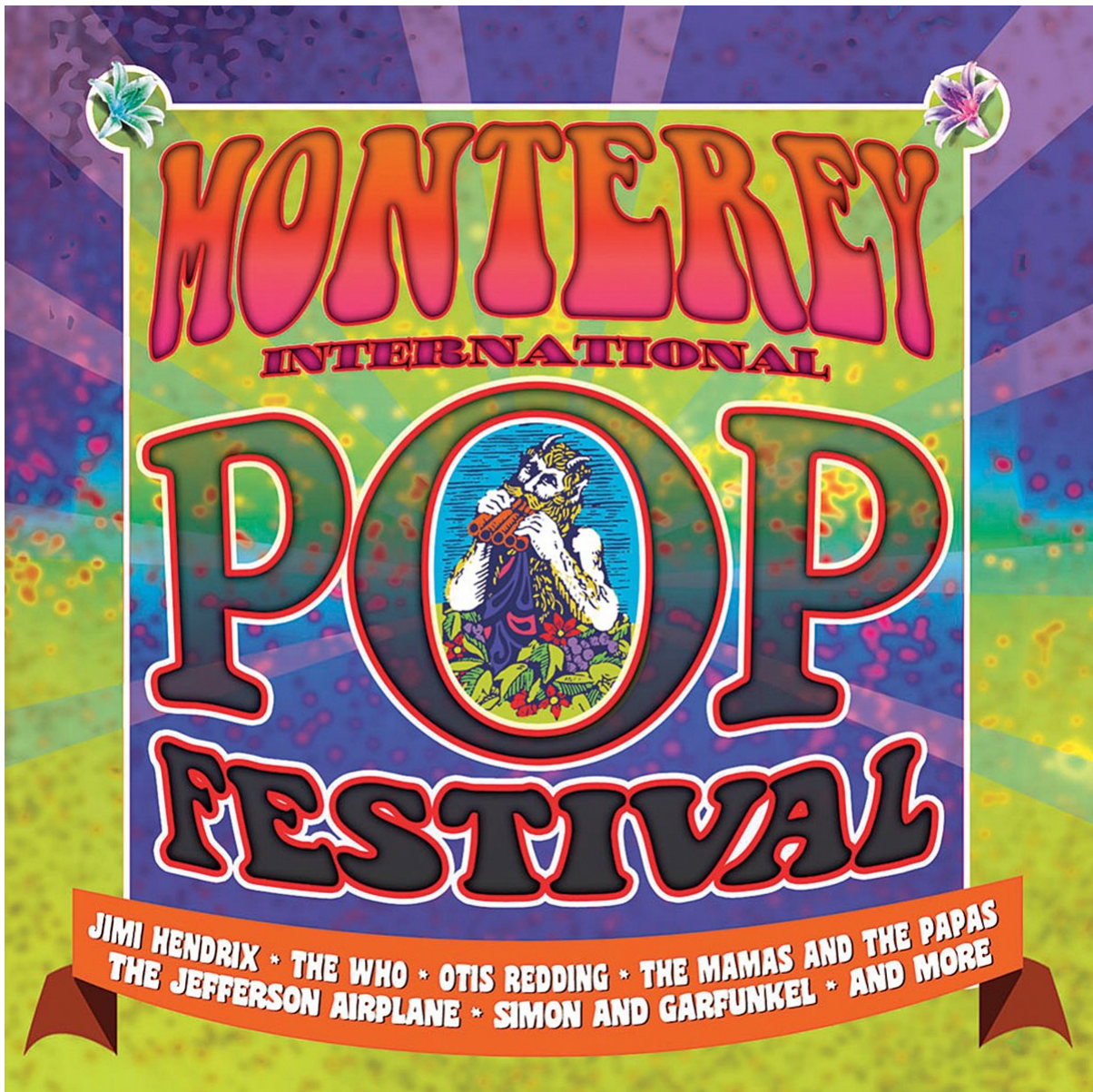
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Psychedelia, the Summer of Love, & Monterey-The Rock  
Culture of 1967



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Senior Thesis  
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For Louis P. Masur and Scott Gac-  
*The best music is essentially there to provide you something to face the world with* -The Boss

## Introduction:

“Music is prophetic. It has always been in its essence a herald of times to come. Music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world. Our music foretells our future.”<sup>1</sup>

Prior to this season of political retribution, turmoil on the streets, men on the moon, acid in the drinking water, and escalating wars overseas, the nascent Baby Boom generation had turned the power of its numbers and the potency of its idealism into an unmatched alliance between the popular and the revolutionary, the elite and the mainstream. Standing astride the barricades at every turn—social, emotional, political, artistic—the musicians and bands of 1965-1968, in the songs they sang, the albums they delivered, and the causes they espoused, were the only artists who consistently stood atop the mountain, commandeered the stages at the most important rallies, and issued all the crucial manifestos.<sup>2</sup>

The Monterey International Pop Festival is over, all over. And what was it? Was it one festival, many festivals, a festival at all? Does anything sum it up, did it mean anything, and are there any themes? Was it just a collection of rock groups of varying levels of proficiency doing their bit for a crowd of thousands who got their fill of whatever pleasure or sensation they sought? Was it the most significant meeting of an avant-garde since the Armory show or some Dadaist happening in the 1920s? Was it, as the stage banner said, ‘Love, flowers, music,’ or was it Jimi Hendrix playing his guitar as if it was an enormous penis and then burning it, smashing it, and flicking its broken pieces like holy water into a baffled, berserk audience? Was it a hundred screaming freak kids with war-painted faces howling and bashing turned-over oil-drum trash cans like North African trance dancers, or was it the thousands of sweet hippies who wandered, sat, and slept on the grass with flutes and bongos, beads and bubbles, laughing and loving softly?<sup>3</sup>

### ***In the beginning-precursors of Rock’s Ascension to Supremacy:***

On the morning of June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1967 the mass of concert-goers, which had emerged from San Francisco and every far-reaching corner of America, awoke with one unified and disappointing realization—Monterey was officially over. The weekend of June 16<sup>th</sup> had marked the successful launch of rock music’s first ever large-scale outdoor music festival, coined the Monterey International Pop Festival. Yet by the following Monday, three days of unprecedented musical talent, peace, and universally positive vibes had disintegrated into the ether, bringing a lamentable return to reality. What had occurred at Monterey that weekend had been the materialization of something remarkable, a fleeting celebration of rock music, youthful counterculture, and the collective fulfillment of the hippies’ far-out vision of a rejuvenated, joyous America. As Robert Lydon, a music critic who was

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Attali. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Pollock. *By the Time We Got to Woodstock: The Great Rock 'n' Roll Revolution of 1969* (New York: Backbeat Books, 2009), xii

<sup>3</sup> Michael Lydon. *Flashbacks* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 22

present at the festival, exclaimed, “The Monterey International Pop Festival was a dream come true. An odd, baffling, and at times threatening dream, but one whose main theme was the creation and further growth of rock ‘n’ roll music, a music as young, vital, and beautiful as any being made today.”<sup>4</sup>

While it would be nice to consider Monterey as the apotheosis of hippie spontaneity, the fruition of Monterey and everything it so delicately and convincingly demonstrated about rock-culture’s ascension to widespread prominence as an artistic movement, the festival’s multifaceted existence had been years in the making. What makes the rock genre a unique music-culture from its birth to its present existence is its innate quality of spontaneous transformation—a quality which has allowed it to transcend the normal, fleeting life-cycle of a popular music. Between 1965-1969 rock went through an incredible transformation like no other American genre had done before, a transformation which can be attributed to the revolutionary fervor of the three great rock festivals: Monterey, Woodstock and Altamont. With a graceful fluidity, rock left behind its insular mainstream, boy-band innocence of the early 1960s to search for a more meaningful identity within American culture. This identity was built into the foundation of the rock festival, a cultural product which celebrated spontaneity, community, and most importantly, music as a peaceful means of revolt, challenging popular culture to reconsider its strictly enforced vision of the “American Experience.”

So why focus on exhuming the lasting relevance of rock culture’s rise to national prominence through the vehicle of Monterey rather than covering the entire era in which three festivals stamped their legacy as the mass celebrations of rock’s most formative years? The answer is simple: Monterey represented the materialization of a community’s revolutionary vision of change—an outdoor festival which would serve as the most important contribution to rock’s development as the ultimate medium of self expression and a means of collective escape from the harsh rules and regulations of the outside world. Although folk, jazz and pop festivals had preceded it, Monterey was the brainchild of a developing countercultural scene with the ceaseless desire to utilize the festival not only as a

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Lydon, "Monterey Pops! An International Pop Festival," *Newsweek*, June 20, 1967, 10

showcase of their free-spirited rock, but as a gateway to promote their radical ideals through a music that challenged, and beckoned the nation to question societal norms through celebrating the clean slate of the present. While Monterey spawned two great festivals and a glorious era of rock music, she would always be the proud mother and the holder of the hippies' original seed of thought. Yes Woodstock was the pinnacle and Altamont was the symbolic end of an era, but Monterey was the mythical progenitor and would always be remembered as the beginning of a revolution where revolt was peaceful and change would come if only everyone could "Turn on, tune in, and drop out." If one was to study one particular moment in time for the purpose of ascertaining the most critical element of rock-culture's establishment within the American consciousness during the 1960s, it would be Monterey—a festival which celebrated a generation's most exciting art form and held the vital seed of thought for its ensuing proliferation. The significance of Monterey was in its tangible culmination of rock's complex history, at once catapulting rock's influence from the limiting media of records and radio to the widespread accessibility of the stage while transforming American culture's prevailing aversion towards individual self-expression through the uninhibited euphoria of psychedelia. Not only a festival, Monterey was the door through which rock's first prolific phase of development in psychedelia could divide and conquer as a musical fountain of wealth, one which has permeated the structure of popular culture, maintaining the relevance of liberal self-expression to this day.

What comes next is the story of how rock-culture blossomed; a story which began during the Beat-influenced folk-rock revival of the mid-sixties, spreading its fertile roots across each and every willing musical tangent, building at a furious pace as it embraced the seductive authenticity of the hippie aesthetic, when finally, its public marriage to the live venue sparked a new and unexpectedly decisive phenomenon—that of cultural revolution. Through Monterey, one can see how a culture and a music revived a collective sense of hope in the world's greatest and most sought after cultural mantra—"The American Dream." While this dream, as encapsulated in the American rock festival, was temporarily sequestered by murder, the darkest flaw of countercultural excess, the vision of rock-

culture proved resilient, ditching the great era of the festival to rebuild its dual-roots of liberal revolt and rock innovation until it was ready to conceive of a new mass medium of revolution.

The structure of the ensuing analysis is divided into five chapters, excluding the introduction, based upon a more or less chronological study of rock's development, beginning in 1965 and ending at Monterey. Each chapter is intertwined with analysis of diverse scholarly material to extract and examine rock's development and subjective observations utilized to paint an imagery-rich tale of one of America's most fascinating eras of cultural growth. The first half of chapter one explains how one can understand the latter developments of rock-culture in the 1960s i.e. Woodstock and Altamont by simply observing that rock-culture was cyclical in nature, and the end of Monterey marked the beginning of the second cycle. The rest of the chapter provides a brief, yet telling contextual synopsis of the macro-cultural occurrences which effectually laid down the ideological niche for rock's unorthodox vision. In other words, this section points to how rock culture was unique in successfully capitalizing on the failed Avant-Garde movements of the post-war era in combating the sense of ennui cast down by the rigid regulations and self-limiting uniformity of a conservative society. Secondly, because the analysis covers an incredibly diverse slew of cultural, musical, and ideological elements in a short period of time, this section lays down the basic framework of the ensuing argument.

The second chapter focuses on the general development of the rock "umbrella," as it voraciously consumed genre upon genre, rapidly monopolizing the most innovative talent of the day as it began to form a concrete identity. Also, this section focuses on the specific development of a cultural identity built into the "hippie aesthetic," the ideological base of rock which provided further fuel for creative expansion. The third section attempts to capture a short list of the overarching flavors built into the San Francisco rock scene while analyzing the genre's integration into a live medium. These styles fall under the expansive category of the antepenultimate technical developments of rock. These broad styles gave birth to rock's three most symbolic elements: socially relevant lyrics, the iconic "front-man" and the potency of guitar-lead free-form improvisation. The fourth section



continues the funnel effect by briefly analyzing the penultimate influence, known as the “British Sound,” then switches to the final phase of rock’s authentic identity during the 1960s—the development of the era’s most distinctive sound, psychedelic-rock, and the centralization of rock culture in the creative mecca of Haight-Ashbury. Last, the final section breaks down the multifaceted development of rock’s greatest accomplishment, the outdoor festival; covering in great detail rock culture’s original stamp on popular culture—the spiritual catharsis which defined Monterey.

## **Chapter One: Developing the niche for rock culture & Monterey as a “savior” of Avant-Garde ideals**

In a matter of years, rock had progressed from a generic mainstay of the pop charts to a multifaceted genre which had essentially consumed, or at least integrated the most innovative and culturally relevant sub-genres under its broad umbrella. Originally a studio art form with the occasional appearance of a band on live TV, rock progressed into a music which was wholly evocative of a burgeoning counterculture scene, mirroring the culture’s revolutionary fervor for ideological change in its passionate vocals and expressive instrumentation. In a way, rock was synonymous with the rise of the bohemian West Coast scene which eventually coalesced in the authentic identity of the hippie movement. Thus came the organic marriage between rock music and liberal culture, expressed simply as “rock-culture.” Together these entities formed a symbiotic relationship, challenging each other to create the most radical and innovative form of self-expression in a playful competition that bore some of the most revolutionary ideals and art forms of the 1960s. Without a doubt rock culture’s most legendary contribution to American society was the revitalized cultural phenomenon of the outdoor festival—a long-standing aspect of American music whose energy mirrored the creative spontaneity of both rock and its budding cultural counterpart, the hippies. The crucial catalyst for this original outdoor celebration of life, love, and music was psychedelic-rock, a newly formed style of the genre which embodied with remarkable success the unbridled creativity of rock-culture and its most beloved enhancer of artistic spontaneity—LSD.

Interestingly, while psychedelic rock symbolized the first true and mature identity of rock’s prolific existence, its own existence in American culture marked the seminal *beginning* of rock’s reign as the nation’s most vital form of artistic vision. Thus while Monterey and psychedelia are often referred to as the pinnacle of rock as both a music and a form of countercultural celebration, the larger significance is that this profound combination of self-expression should be considered the

fundamental catalyst in solidifying rock's cultural supremacy from Monterey until the close of the decade. To truly understand rock music's effect on American culture in the 1960s, one must thoroughly analyze the entire lifecycle of rock's most glorious beginnings from its humble roots in 1965 to its status as the definitive art form of the Baby Boomer generation whose passion for liberal revolution and insatiable will for socio-political change peaked by 1969. During these five years, rock's transformation can be broken into two periods: its rapid development in the former half and its volatile superstardom in the latter half. It was this latter half which can be best defined as the era of the great American rock festival, during which the genre existed vicariously through the eyes of an all-encompassing manic, reaching its highest highs, where the music temporarily ascended into an otherworldly realm of euphoria, and experiencing its lowest lows, when rock-culture fell back onto earth at a devastating speed.

In the simplest form of summary, the mania of this latter period can be associated with the three great rock festivals of the era, Monterey, Woodstock, and Altamont. The Monterey International Pop Festival was the first glimpse of rock's massive potential, where culture, music, and ideology coalesced into one collective and celebratory vision. This grand vision was seen as the ideal method of commemorating the creativity of an alternative cultural platform, founded upon the positive vibes of uninhibited spontaneity and the motto "Peace, Love and Music." Although it took two years to recreate, the time spent developing what would become the Woodstock Music and Art Fair was time well spent. 1969 was the definitive year in American history which scholars refer to as the epitome of liberal revolution in the respect that the proposed *change* of the American social and ideological structure seemed wholly achievable. Without a doubt, Woodstock will always be remembered as this critical junction between revolutionary and reactionary generations. Woodstock truly succeeded in assembling the best and most diverse musical minds to make the dream of hippie virtue as the ultimate revitalizer of liberal thought a reality in challenging the regressive conservatism and perverse inequalities of American popular culture. In a shocking turn of events, Altamont Speedway Free Festival, the final rock festival of the 1960s, and the event which was supposed to serve as the

celebratory introduction to the decade which would realize the peace-loving ideals of the hippies and apply them to popular culture, did just the opposite. Instead of promoting the endearing goodness of the hippies like the previous two festivals, Altamont will always be associated with the diabolical half of the counterculture's yin-yang duality.

Literally and symbolically, Altamont brought rock-culture's euphoric encampment in the sky back down to earth with astonishing speed, reversing years of progress and its holy pursuit of change. In irrevocable fashion, the incredible talent which had spotlighted the show was trumped by the disastrous consequences resulting from a ruthless murder feat from the stage. Altamont was truly a requiem memorializing rock-culture's lost innocence and an event which marked the metaphysical deconstruction of a promising countercultural movement. What had been a surreal, five year long dream built upon the hippie's musical vision of change, a battle of good over evil, and a bright spot in a dark era, had come to an abrupt end that fateful day of December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1969. After years of unheralded success and two blissful rock festivals, the third mass celebration of a culture built around excess had finally crossed over the fine line from party of freedom to a riot of lawlessness. The story of the hippie rock-culture's rise to fame was as fascinatingly alluring in its scope as its fall from grace was tragically sudden, yet such a perilous fall was not synonymous with death, rather it was a molting obsolete layers. What you will see from this story is that rock-culture's volatility was matched by its resilience, and every infamous failure, of which there were many, was merely tossed aside as a bump in the road towards community "enlightenment" and the lasting spread of a pertinent musical art form. Such a relentless will to inseminate popular culture with positive morals and musical revelation in the face of constant, badgering adversity was literally a mirror reflection of liberalism's own arduous quest back to mainstream cultural relevance in the decades after WWII.

What happened at Altamont was due directly to the inevitable backlash of lawless and excessive living; in this case the result was the cold-blooded murder of a man due to an overbearing crowd tension incited by the enhanced and distorted perceptions from the use of hallucinogenics and stimulants. Although it was the direst, the murder at Altamont was far from the first consequence of

living directly through the risks of excess and abusing the once sacrosanct practice of drug consumption—a ritual which became convoluted by mass accessibility. Analyzing the former half of rock's story in the 1960s illuminates the seeds of thought which coalesced into Monterey. Thus in understanding the aesthetic of this first period of rock-culture, one can achieve an ample understanding of the entire era, as the trials and tribulations of 1965-1967 served as a template for rock-culture's future development. Altamont was merely indicative of the unassailable consequences of excess which struck the originators of the hippie movement as the mass influx of youth populations into Haight-Ashbury during the Summer of Love almost instantaneously corrupted the peaceful and respectful culture which they had tirelessly built from scratch. Nonetheless the local inhabitants of the neighborhood quickly adapted to the population bulge, deflecting the moral decay of their countercultural vision by promoting the universal accessibility of their beloved art form—psychedelic rock. Thus while rock was the musical life-force of the hippies, the true magic of rock-culture lay in its unwavering resilience, the product of the movement's core characteristic of transmutability. As history has proven, most cultural products linked to emotion and speculation are cyclical in their success, ebbing and flowing over time rather than growing in a linear fashion. A perfect example of an emotionally based, cyclical product is the American stock market-- when a security's price rises at a remarkable pace, the ratio of price to intrinsic value becomes fearfully skewed, leaving the potential for a sharp price correction extremely high and almost inevitable. In a sense, this is exactly what happened to rock-culture during its first, extremely volatile life cycle--a rapid and unstable rise in rock's value as a cultural commodity from 1967 until the end of 1969 sent a glaring warning signal that a correction in its near-invincible growth was due.

It is a fact of life that even innately good people and visions are met with unavoidable pitfalls in their progress towards enlightenment. In a similar sense, it is only natural for something which seems innately good to possess some strain of evil, miniscule as it may be. These simple facts are infused directly into the philosophy of yin-yang duality, a two-sided entity composed of good and evil which exists in a state of equilibrium due to the basic equation that over time, the ebb and flow of one

element is directly proportional to that of the other, eventually balancing out. Such is the case with relationships such as day and night, male-female marriage, and more specifically, the history of American bi-partisan politics. Within this range exists the rise and fall of America's most iconic era of rock-culture. Even with such drastic attacks by yang's embodiment of the violence, drug abuse, and the convoluted morals that come with mass-consumption like the abuse of the pure hippie lifestyle during the Summer of Love or the murder at Altamont, the virtuous counterpart of yin always returned to reintroduce an equilibrium. This extended philosophical analogy translates into rock-culture's ability to persevere the consequences of its own volatile nature by maintaining the vitality of its constituents which mattered the most—the music and the ideological passion to induce change. These essential elements of the counterculture which built its identity on the West Coast allowed the movement to transcend the foreboding failures of its Avant-Garde predecessors such as the Beat Generation and the Folk Revival, and typify why rock-culture was a unique and effectual product of American liberal thought during the 1960s.

The story of rock, however, is not the story of a magical, “out-of-thin-air” occurrence; rock's maturation is the story of an organic reaction, a potent synthesis of many pre-existing musical pulses. In this sense, rock music is a paradox. The genre is as authentic as any in the history of music, yet at the same time, its authenticity stems from the insatiable, almost subconscious appropriation of American music's most prolific genres. In a matter of years, myriad yet dormant musical ancestors were reincarnated into rock—the one, all-encompassing super-genre. As T.S. Eliot bluntly mused, “immature artists imitate, mature artists steal.”<sup>5</sup> This witty anecdote would be integrated as an overarching symbol of rock's rise to the realm of the holy in American culture, as the ascension was the direct result of an aggressive, unapologetic musical theft. Even the best songwriter of a generation, Bob Dylan, was known to say things to the effect of “find a music you love, steal it and make it your own.” The point here is not to criticize the theft, for as we will see, the creative plagiarism was vital and legitimate. The fascinating reality of America's musical Renaissance in 1967

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<sup>5</sup> T.S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* (New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1928), 25

was that it would never have occurred were it not for the emerging rock musician's ability to ingeniously capitalize on pre-existing material. Simply put, the immense achievement and success of Monterey that legendary weekend in 1967 was the product of relentless musical re-layering and innovation stemming from a countercultural emphasis on unbridled artistic experimentation.

Nearly every aspect of the emerging rock culture during the period from 1965 through to 1967 and the Summer of Love, contained paradox—making the period ever more fascinating to pick apart. From the folk-rock revival and the emerging hippie counterculture to the outdoor festival, each cultural entity embodied a duality symbolizing the creation of something new while simultaneously revealing roots firmly planted in a previous era. This fact alone is a study in itself—was rock's rise to international prominence merely fueled by a resurgence of liberal revolt or by the aspirations of America's most creative and forward-thinking generation? The answer is both; rock culture was and still is an anomaly. Its success lay in the ingenious notion of channeling dormant art forms through the filter of a revitalized emphasis on the individual and the countercultural aesthetic of fearless artistic experimentation. While many of the great artists of the early 1960s understood that their music was innovative, it is hard to imagine that they understood the extent to which their music would affect the future of America's most prolific countercultural movement. From Bob Dylan to the Beatles to the Grateful Dead, artists of completely different musical and cultural backgrounds shared one profound, overarching passion—the desire to create a sound that was not only refreshing and dynamic, but also indicative of a decisive cultural attitude.

What was this attitude, and why was it so critical to the development of a generation whose innate desire was to utilize music as a form of conscientious objection? Such a broad question has been studied and contested by historians, sociologists and scholars for the past forty-odd years, as its answer provides fascinating insight into a generation and a music so often misinterpreted. Was rock music a genre steeped in rebellion? Yes! That answer, however, is far too simplistic to capture the essence of rock and its culture. More than rebellion, rock culture as it came into existence by the late 1960s can be accurately defined as an international revolution of ideals. What occurred during those

three days in the early summer of 1967 at Monterey transcended rock's original essence as a medium of rebellion, one synonymous with active dissent—a term seminal in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century resurgence of liberal thought through the vehicle of the Avant-Garde movement. Perhaps the hardest-rocking group of all time, the Rolling Stones, have embodied the essence of rebellion since their early years: against authority, against tradition, against monogamy, against anything and everything that was considered the norm. The beauty of rock culture as early as 1967 is that groups like the Rolling Stones, as godly as their influence may have been as the antithesis of political correctness, were symbolic of only a small facet of the genre's enormous ideological landscape. The point here is that even the wide breadth of a descriptor like rebellion was simply too narrow to capture the spirit of rock culture during its pinnacle, the timeless three-year era of the great outdoor rock festival.

Monterey, the mother of the rock festival, was integral to the future of American culture-- a concrete indication of how rock music was not simply a fad, but a unique and enduring lifestyle. As history had proved, post-war Avant-Garde movements were evocative of America's underrepresented liberal population. Their scope, however, was limited by the fleeting success of their ideological catalyst, rebellion, as the term had always maintained a negative connotation, making it insular and forcing its vision underground. As we will see, this was not the case with rock culture; while it was certainly Avant-Garde in its development, its vision and broad appeal destined it for a different fate from the transitory life of its rebellious predecessors. A revolution in every aspect of the word, rock culture as it materialized in the eyes of the American public under the auspices of Monterey's matriarchal touch, contained the organic resilience of an Avant-Garde movement with a new twist—positive thinking. What, you may ask, could this vague and generalized attitude have to do with the ultimate success and longevity of rock culture? Part of the answer is embedded in rock's nucleus as it was gloriously presented to the public in the summer of 1967, and that answer is psychedelia—quite



literally an experience “characterized by the striking perception of aspects of one's mind previously unknown, or by the creative exuberance of the mind liberated from its ostensibly ordinary fetters.”<sup>6</sup>

Covering the formative years of rock's technical and ideological growth quickly exposes the enormous influence of the “psychedelic experience.” This introspective experience is a factor omnipresent in the first phase of rock culture's development, as it led to the transformation of the genre from a predominantly studio-based medium to a live form of entertainment. In a more abstract sense, psychedelia physically and psychologically opened America's eyes to the light, ethereal, artistic and joyful qualities of a burgeoning counterculture which had peacefully existed for years beneath the surface of a materialistic, mass-oriented popular culture. Psychedelia was the bright, weightless yin which served as the countervailing element to the heavy, burdensome yang of the predominant conservatism in the macro-scheme of America's dual-consciousness in the 1960s. Finally, psychedelia was Monterey and Monterey was psychedelia, a symbiotic relationship in which neither element could succeed without the other.

Rock culture's firmly-established identity after years of prolific development was partly product of psychedelia, an all-encompassing lifestyle choice which gave the genre a transcendent quality, simultaneously catapulting it to a realm where no other music had ever ventured. While the rock genre as a whole had been evolving before this period of psychedelia and would continue to evolve well after psychedelia became obsolete in the 1970s, the psychedelic phenomenon was seminal to the development of the genre's most revolutionary period of growth and cultural relevance. It is here in the mid-1960s where the secular, rebellious music consummated its relationship with the abstract and holy mysticism of the psychedelic experience, a harmonious marriage of artistic rebellion and positive vibrations that induced experimental sensory euphoria. In a metaphysical sense and with the benefit of hindsight, rock culture was thus wholly unique as the first post-war Avant-Garde movement to become an enduring phenomenon. This durability was the result of a simple combination of a potent art form, rock, with an intriguing lifestyle choice, psychedelia, that was

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<sup>6</sup> Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (New York: Harper, 1954), 86

experientially fertile, but most importantly, indicative of productive social constructs such as peace, love, and community. This relationship is an integral component of rock's spacious, ideological energy, and symbolizes the colorful and evocative painting built from the more objective "easel" of historical analysis. The palette it provides serves not only as a framework, but it also provides a tangible focal point fixed within the illustrious story of rock's acid-soaked vision. Thus, with the growing acceptance of the psychedelic experience, the notion of rock culture was firmly established in the minds of those who lived within this limited sphere of influence. What was needed to expand this regional phenomenon to a national stage was a catalyst to transform California's rock culture into America's rock culture. After years of augmenting old, dusty musical flavors and channeling them under the expansive rock umbrella, one transformational event, a reincarnation if you will, would leave an indelible mark on the American consciousness as the revolutionary public introduction to the rock revolution—the outdoor rock festival. Without a doubt, Monterey was the final and most critical test of the rock "experiment." Its unanimous success will always be remembered as the first instance of rock's greatest contribution to American culture—the celebration of live music as a method of soothing the soul and living in the present, free from the heavy burdens of the big world outside.

### ***Germinating the seeds of rebellion***

Rock, as folk music of the white middle-class American, did more than fill a cultural void or provide esthetic interests in otherwise constricted lives...Rock dissolved the everyday rubbish of the young American and revealed his dream life. It flaked away the thin whitewash of outward conformity and docility and revealed basic fears and desires of the generation that grew up after Korea, after McCarthy and through the smiling placidity of the Eisenhower years. The message of rock was hardly a secret—it was a rejection of middle-class America.<sup>7</sup>

Sadly, by the mid 1960s, the relevance of individual pursuits was all but defunct in a post-war America where uniformity and conservatism had attempted to quell the liberal force of even the most potent movements such as the Civil Rights movement. While such profound sources of conscientious objection to civil inequalities aroused much attention, America was certainly most focused on priming its finely tuned war-machine, and thus avoiding the cries of the disenfranchised and liberal-

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Santelli, *Aquarius Rising: The Rock Festival Years* (New York: Dell Pub, 1980), 7

minded populations. For many Baby Boomers, the largest generation by numbers ever to be born within an eighteen-year period, between 1946 and 1964, the restriction of individual aspiration induced by mass culture was an unacceptable reality. The rock culture which emerged in 1965 was the direct product of youthful rebellion against the prevailing nihilism of popular culture and the ennui inflicted by living within the fearful environment of Cold War America. While rock was originally fueled by the desire to rebel against the repressive, self-limiting tendencies of popular culture as the Beat generation had done ten years earlier, its identity by the summer of 1967 was less about scorn and angst than it was about a “separate but equal” mentality. The recycled term was indicative of the leading faction of this new countercultural trend, the hippies, as they sought to bring forth a resurgence of the long lost American ideals of peace, love, and personal freedoms while deliberately living outside the boundaries of the society they could no longer relate to. This idyllic vision was the result of a choice to embrace a lifestyle which celebrated the simple pleasures of the present—for if lurking around the corner, the atomic bomb was to cast its fatal vengeance upon the fragility of human life, one might as well live free of inhibition and explore the uncharted territory of human nature before the candle burned out.

Covering rock culture and its free-spirited denizens reveals a fascinating snippet of 1960s liberal revolt, for it was this group and the artistic vision that they prophesized which provided a glimmer of hope and vitality to a nation increasingly associated with social turmoil, materialism and fear. From its dislocated roots in clean-cut pop-rock and simple folk ballads to its adoption of acid-soaked psychedelia, and finally its apotheosis at Monterey, the organic evolution of rock had established an identity after years of gradual and spontaneous growth by tying in musical elements that served the same purpose in pushing the boundaries of innovation. The rock genre was the definitive artistic contribution of a generation who saw music as a peaceful method of rebelling against the tenets and strictures of a repressive conservatism. For the purpose of reiterating this point intermittently, adjectives with the antecedent “re,” are used to reinforce the fact that the abundance of rock culture by 1967 was a product of thoroughly intertwined cultural visions, both old and new.

Specifically, the infatuating allure of rock culture, which was first showcased to the American public at the Monterey Pop Festival, was truly a wonderfully experimental *reincarnation* of the artistic, individualistic spontaneity of the American Avant-Garde vision—a vision inexorably linked to 20<sup>th</sup> century liberal thought. The uninhibited, countercultural tendencies of Avant-Garde thinkers had been all but wiped out by America’s regression into Nationalism and mass-oriented politics.

The seeds of Avant-Garde thought are seminal to one’s complete understanding of rock culture’s ultimate success in converting social disillusionment into a unifying, forward thinking platform. This unique ideology capitalized on the failures of the past to produce a revolutionary movement centered on the celebratory qualities of the musical art form—a notion thus far unheeded. So where had the great artists of the post-war era gone wrong? The Beat Generation had tenaciously fought the all-consuming banality and nihilism of post-war conservatism and conformity, yet had failed, falling out of the national spotlight as their angst and art led to a self-destructive attitude that was neither accessible nor accommodating of growth. Jazz, blues, soul, r & b, and even rock ‘n’ roll, some of the greatest musical accomplishments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, appealed to minority audiences and were therefore incapable of achieving large-scale social impact. Much of this failure was due to the stubborn reality that African American rooted achievement was perpetually downplayed as vulgar, crude and hyper-sexual. Even the Folk Revival of the early 1960s, an endearing music so intimately linked to America’s past as a righteous, empowering art of revolt, and white revolt at that, was cyclical in its relevance and staunchly traditional, failing to capture the rapidly evolving revolutionary zeal of the nation’s new source of liberal revolt—the Baby Boomers.

Each of these three cultural entities served the same fundamental purposes--innovative mediums of artistic self-expression created to revitalize a sense of lost identity. Unfortunately, each one’s fall from grace mirrored the previous movement’s futile life cycle. The discernable cycle went as follows: that of a fantastic artistic vision provoking a sense of change and collective meaning, a period of acknowledgement and public success, and finally, an inevitable loss of public interest due to a lack of understanding or a dismissal of its “innate” flaw (self-destructive mentality, racial

connotation, and over-attachment to tradition, respectively.) By 1965, a graveyard populated with the dormant spirits of post-war artistic failures had materialized. These skeletons in the closet represented a foreboding symbol of America's mechanized future. That future presented a metaphysical threat of impending devastation to any whispering of an Avant-Garde vision tenacious enough to exert influence over an unforgiving popular culture. Hope was not lost though, for like a nagging virus, these three artistic currents contained inherent strength and resistance—they could be temporarily quelled, yet their resilient spirit was built from the same American DNA that exulted in the inequalities of popular reactionaryism. The will of liberal self-expression was never totally exterminated, it was merely forced into dormancy, quietly flourishing under the nose of vengeful authoritarians like the infamous Joseph McCarthy who sought to destroy any glimmer of liberal thought.

There is something perturbing about the word dormant; its definition suggests that a great reaction once occurred, and for whatever reason, the object settled into remission. The word plants a seed in the imagination. What is it that will awake the dormant object? How will the dormant object turn active? The fruition of a rock culture, whose only rule was to live free of inhibition and experiment in the uncharted realm of artistic expression, provided the necessary elements to reactivate the post-war countercultural spirit. Because of the spontaneity of counterculture in 1967, rock's widespread revolution during the Summer of Love may have seemed like an instantaneous fomentation of youthful energy in the form of music--a situation commonly manifested in one's memory of Monterey. However, the process of gathering music and culture under the glorious expanse of the "mature" rock umbrella in the summer of 1967 differs greatly from the collective, drug-laden memories of those who were present. The reality of this extraordinary confluence of talent and vision was both gradual and complex.

Rock's rise from a formulaic, radio/studio based, mainstream genre to its comfortable and firmly established status as a predominantly live performance medium of entertainment was first and foremost a product of the musicians who we remember today as rock's most prolific contributors.

Groups and solo artists like the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix were without a doubt the most important figureheads of the genre's innovation. However, the rock superstars are merely one piece of the multifaceted story of rock's gradual rise to glory. In terms of the actual music, the staggering explosion of new groups arriving on the musical scene during the mid-to-late 1960s played an equally integral role in building the breadth of the rock umbrella. In addition to the superstars, the various flavors of rock's development, including, but not limited to, the California scenes of folk-rock and psychedelic-rock and the integration of international styles such as British, guitar-heavy blues-rock and the enormous influence of Indian-based raga require discussion. These styles and many more aided in the rock musicians' general will to break down the barriers of audience expectation and the traditional boundaries of genre-based music. Their acknowledgement is crucial in painting an accurate "landscape" of rock as it existed by 1967.

Of equal importance to the actual music were the attitudes and ideologies of a liberal population which became intertwined with the music, giving the genre a discernable identity and supplying the fuel for rock's unprecedented innovation which was as much social as it was musical. Infamous Avant-Garde visions of the past such as the Beat movement, the Folk Revival and rock's original state as rock "n" roll, played profound roles in the development of rock's overarching persona, known generally as the "Hippie aesthetic." In juxtaposing the ideologies of the hippies with these three earlier movements, one can observe how the bohemian Mecca of Haight-Ashbury was essentially a mirror reflection of these past currents of liberal thought. Most importantly, this comparison illuminates the crucial link between hippie culture and rock music, a link which augmented these past Avant-Garde elements in a way which allowed rock culture to transcend the prior, inevitable failures of post-war liberal expression. It is truly fascinating to note the interconnections of the post-war "underground," as each of these movements, whether literary or musical in origin, played similar roles in attempting to break loose from the enervating fog of an American popular culture, which seemed to have forgotten the central importance which art and individuality played in maintaining a democratic society.

A thorough study of musical history, this story serves the ultimate purpose of illuminating why rock was the most important and exciting artistic development of the 1960s. It will also indirectly highlight why the genre should be considered a national savior, which alleviated the stress of the Cold War and possible nuclear annihilation, liberated the mind from existential gluttony of materialism and conservative mores, and forged a path for the resuscitation of liberal values. The basic idea behind this two-pronged analysis is to yet again reiterate the magic behind rock's many layers, as both a form of musical genius and a reflection of the complexities of greater society. At first glance, rock music is simply music, but digging deeper, one can see how the genre surpassed the unilateral purpose of popular music as a potent and salable artistic commodity. The Velvet Underground's first album was gorgeously tragic, typifying the immense contribution of the New York scene to the greater rock sound; but underneath the crunchy guitars is the living, breathing extension of Beat angst, scorn and destruction sardonically annunciated in Lou Reed's biting monotone. The Beatles album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was arguably the most extraordinary example of rock's creative fertility then and now. A whimsical template of rock prophecy, *Sgt Pepper's* contributed to rock's further expansion by challenging and blowing away any pre-existing standards for musical production, but it also served as the precise embodiment of psychedelia, "Successfully evoking a surreal dream world in both the sonic textures and words."<sup>8</sup>

The rock musician was not simply a vocalist or guitarist trying to make a living or find fame; such a banal purpose was considered crass—a designation which never permeated the minds of the artists who found themselves performing at Monterey. To the groups later covered, being a musician was not simply a profession, it was more *real* than that—being a musician meant being a muse of the disenfranchised who saw music as a means of personal revelation and a vehicle of attitudinal deconstruction. In a play on words of Norman Mailer's revolutionary essay, "The White Negro," in the holy sacrament of marriage between psychedelic rock and hippie culture, acid was the wedding

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<sup>8</sup> Chris Jones, "Review of The Beatles *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*," Album review, *BBC News*, 2007

ring of the hippies and Monterey was the cultural dowry respectfully reciprocated by rock. It is the marriage between these two Avant-Garde movements and the psychedelic gifts of their ceremony which form the steadfast pillars of the ensuing argument. These steadfast pillars, extended in thin air above the steep precipices of turmoil below, maintained the hopeful energy of rock culture as it joyously existed during the summer of 1967. This is an attempt to convey the story of rock's long, strange trip--from its disconnected roots as a regional phenomenon to its cohesion with the "hippie aesthetic," to finally, its transcendence into the collective consciousness of the American experience through the "blushing, first time exuberance" of Monterey, the mother of the American rock festival.



## **Chapter Two: Building the rock “umbrella” & the “Hippie Aesthetic”**

To historians who covered the decade of the 1960s, the summer of 1967 represented a critical historical juncture in American popular culture where the counter-cultural movement of the hippies reached the national spotlight. Just as Jack Kerouac's On The Road had catapulted the “subversive” ideals of the Beat Generation into the realm of public consciousness only a decade or so before, the summer of 1967 represented the reemergence of threatening liberal sentiment en masse. In fact, the rise and fall of the Beat Generation's presence within American popular culture was inherently linked to the rekindling of the youth revolt which the hippies willingly embodied by the mid-1960s. Around the country, youth revolt had sprung up from the framework of the feisty Baby Boomer generation. Along with rise of the Avant-Garde rock-culture, revolts from the Civil Rights movement to the Feminist movement to the anti-Vietnam war movement increased by the day, building off the energy and influence of their liberal counterparts. While rock-culture was in its heart an apolitical vision, focused rather on community and musical self-expression, its leaders' desire to promote ideological change through music was aimed directly at the blanket of conservative values which had enveloped the nation since the termination of World War Two. By 1967, this vision had developed into the outdoor rock festival—a large scale event created to celebrate the freedoms associated with the resurgence of liberal values. Monterey's success symbolized the beginning of the era of the great rock festival, where the social currents revolving around individual freedoms of peace, love, drug-induced euphoria, and most significantly musical creativity coalesced into the counterculture of the hippie. In simple form, the outdoor rock festival was a celebration of freedom from the ennui of conservative post-war ideals and the culmination of various socio-political and musical events of the mid-1960s which had successfully transcended the barriers of tradition. These events were integral in the spontaneous creation of the rock festival and are crucial to a thorough understanding of both the three great festivals and the counterculture which brought them into being.

During the mid-1960s, three seemingly independent factors--demographics, liberal visions of change, and musical self-expression—naturally intersected to create a societal catharsis which would become known as “The Summer of Love--” the original summer of sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll and the beginning of the three year rock festival era. To the detached observer, the Summer of Love represented the original conception of the hippie and this new vision of countercultural ideals; ideals which had largely disappeared from the American imagination after the initial surge during the 1950s reign of the Beat Generation. As we will see, the legacy of the Beat Generation contained many parallels to the counterculture which would publicly emerge during the summer of 1967 as a vociferous youth population would express their desire for seemingly radical personal freedoms. Moreover, to this new “beatnik” known as the hippie, this alternative view of the universe had never died, it had merely lain dormant within the young, hip urban population of New York City, and eventually, San Francisco. Unbeknownst to many, the Summer of Love actually marked the demise of the pure hippie aesthetic which had sprung to life during the previous three years in the San Francisco Bay area.

The mid 1960s represented an era of incredibly rapid evolution for the American Music Industry where iconic instances of revolutionary changes in sound compounded on one another to establish the pinnacle of rock ‘n’ roll creativity lasting between the summer of 1967 and the end of the decade. Up to this point, rock had existed in a state of sideways growth, being restricted by unstated, yet understood rules of the mainstream airwaves. Elvis Presley had come and gone, black stars such as Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and Little Richard continued to be overshadowed by their white counterparts, and performances on the Ed Sullivan show were still thoroughly censored to avoid sexuality and obscenity. Mainstream pop-rock was still marked largely by white faces and catchy, inoffensive tunes such as the soft California rhythms of the Beach Boys. To this day the mainstream music aesthetic of “salability first, innovation second,” i.e. choosing the banal yet agreeable white pop star over the hyper-talented black rapper (who by association is predisposed to the hindrances of race and vulgarity regardless of his or her own style) exists as a stubborn reality.

That being said, the rock genre was critical to the process of expanding the boundaries of popular music by forcing culture to accept innovation as a facilitator of new and exciting talent rather than an interference of the prevailing “norm” in popular tastes.

This gradual process of disseminating rock and its natural affinity for innovation into the consciousness of the American public was catalyzed by one historic performance. On February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1964, the Beatles appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, performing “I Want To Hold Your Hand,” a simple love song seen by nearly fifty percent of Americans watching television that night.<sup>9</sup> By April 4<sup>th</sup>, after being in the country for barely two months, the Beatles held every top 5 position on the Billboard Hot 100 singles chart.<sup>10</sup> This incredible feat will be forever known as the beginning of the British Invasion, or the incredible proliferation of British rock ‘n’ roll bands who became popular in the United States from 1964 to 1966. The invasion, which included the Beatles along with the likes of the Rolling Stones, The Animals, and The Kinks resembled the social impact of Elvis Presley a decade before and represented the first of many iconic historical moments which would help to shape the dynamic rock ‘n’ roll genre.

While the British Invasion brought the creative forces of English rock to America, its early sound was in many ways similar to the prevailing pop-rock sound of The Beach Boys. This early music of the Beatles and the Stones avoided the topical nature of the Folk Revival, providing a feel-good escape which “appealed in part to the innocence and good times American youngsters sought after the shocking assassination of President John Kennedy.”<sup>11</sup> Even before establishing their own refined sound, both groups were essentially cover bands, cutting records which presented their own take on American Blues standards. However, while the music was outwardly romantic, inoffensive and conservative, both bands were built around the developing image of the rebellious rock star. If

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<sup>9</sup> Todd Leopold, “When the Beatles Hit America,” CNN, February 10, 2004, <http://articles.cnn.com/2004-02-05/entertainment/beatles>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Neil Hamilton, *The 1960s Counterculture in America* (Santa Barbara: Abc-Clio, 1997), 256

Elvis had created the image, the bands of the British Invasion rejuvenated it. Even though popular culture may not have realized it by early 1965, the British Invasion would set the stage for the fusion of raucous rock ‘n’ roll excess and the unwavering dissent of folk non-conformity. As author Neil Hamilton exclaims, “As trite as their [Beatles] lyrics may have been, their music had a beat, the Liverpool sound, that challenged assembly-line American rock, and the band’s long hair made a statement (much as had Presley’s sideburns a decade earlier) that young people would set their own standards.”<sup>12</sup>

It is fascinating to take a step back and ponder all of the striking links between the socio-political ideologies and musical breakthroughs of the 1950s and the 1960s. Consequently, in analyzing the musical culture of the 1960s, one should notice that the proliferation of countercultural ideologies which supported the new music were merely extensions of self-expression stemming from the overlooked, yet burgeoning liberal culture of the 1950s. One event which revolutionized the state of American music in the 1960s typifies this notion of rejuvenating aspects of the old liberal regime while simultaneously breaking down the preconceived norms of a traditional musical genre. While there were countless artists who provided invaluable material to the evolving music scene of the 1960s, Bob Dylan may have been the most notorious for breaking down both the barriers of musical tradition and abhorring popular culture’s rigid expectations for the creative role of the musician. Covering his role as musician and innovator is an essential task in analyzing how 1960s musical culture was founded upon groundbreaking individual pursuits rather than simple appeasement of the consumer. His performance at The Newport Folk Festival in 1965 shocked the nation; yet one had to merely look at this paradoxical persona thus far to understand that Dylan’s metamorphosis represented a microcosmic mirror of the volatile 1960s counterculture.

In terms of the 1960s, Bob Dylan exemplified the glorified emphasis on the individual’s pursuit of self-understanding and liberal culture’s collective will to break free of the constraints of conformity. However, Dylan was an anomaly, for he sung about social change, and then when

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 256

interviewed, acted as if the assertions that he was a topical songwriter and the “voice of a generation” were ludicrous and completely untrue. Dylan’s enigmatic guise was in many ways a defense against the limitations of being labeled by society. His puzzling yet enthralling character was reminiscent of the African-American folk hero Jim Crow: a trickster by trade, his character was the centerpiece of American minstrelsy, used by whites in blackface to ostensibly satirize “blackness” while serving the more subtle purpose of illuminating pressing topical issues. In a way, Dylan embodied these two traits in reverse fashion: as a musician he portrayed the dark realities of social injustices, yet when he slipped off his acoustic guitar, he befuddled America by professing that perhaps his music, and everything it was supposed to represent was just a cruel joke. Yet the artist’s inscrutable personality was a deft example of the emerging trend of the musician’s will to be set free from mainstream expectations, and only supplemented his most integral contribution to the future attitude of rock-culture.

In April 1965, Dylan released a bluesy, electrified single, “Subterranean Homesick Blues,” a witty rock ‘n’ roll wordplay, that served as a precursor to his transformation into a hybrid folk-rock musician.<sup>13</sup> The initial reaction to his abrupt musical conversion was befuddlement, a mere tremor compared to the shockwave which would ensue in the following months. Beginning in May, Dylan would travel to England to promote this rock single off his newest album, *Bringing It All Back Home*. The tour was captured on D.A. Pennebaker’s iconic documentary Don’t Look Back, a film which followed Dylan’s ascension from folk musician to “one of the most storied figures in rock ‘n’ roll history, completely transforming the music and its expressive possibilities in the minds of those who played it and those who listened to it.”<sup>14</sup> The tense climate of the film’s coverage of Dylan’s various shows is truly disheartening, for the distaste of the audience for their prophet’s new sound is palpable and unwavering. Gone was the magical interconnectedness between musician and audience, a deeply

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<sup>13</sup> Jim Miller, *Flowers in the Dust: The Rise of Rock ‘n’ Roll, 1947-1977* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 222

<sup>14</sup> *Don't Look Back*, DVD, directed by D. A. Pennebaker (New York: Pennebaker Films, 1967).

personal relationship which Dylan had typified as both a bigger-than-life persona and a scraggly, raspy voice of the people. Despite this negative reception overseas, on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1965, Dylan, accompanied by members of The Paul Butterfield Blues Band, began the intro to his new single “Maggie’s Farm,” a song that would forever change the face of rock ‘n’ roll music. The first performance of this song marked a critical juncture in the early history of rock ‘n’ roll: on one side was tradition, the established ideal of folk music and Dylan’s early career; on the other was innovation-the dynamic, electrified sound of Dylan’s masterpiece. However, like his performance in the UK, Dylan’s performance of “Maggie’s Farm” at Newport was received with an outcry of boos from an audience of outraged fans who perceived Dylan’s electric performance as a defilement of pure folk tradition.

Dylan had said the times were changing and the people had responded with adoration, yet when this change had finally materialized in the musician’s stylistic transformation, many could not take the leap of faith. However, as history has told, profound change does not come without setbacks. While many perhaps missed Dylan’s message, famed folk producer Paul Rothchild thoroughly understood the profound foresight of Dylan’s lyrics as a heralding of the age of rock ‘n’ roll-“To me, that night at Newport was as clear as crystal. It’s the end of one era and the beginning of another.”<sup>15</sup> Such was Dylan’s ingenious impact on the future of rock ‘n’ roll, a genre defined not by the stifling limitations of audience expectation and consent, but by the idea of an inclusive realm of sound which could transcend boundaries by accepting change and innovation as the integral components of artistic expression. As this notion began to emerge in the consciousness of both musician and audience, the myth behind Dylan’s electric transformation at Newport was seen less as betrayal, and increasingly as a revolutionary catalyst. Whatever Bob Dylan may or may not have represented through his paradoxical persona, he should always be considered a poet whose words had an uncanny ability to foretell the future. This fact is exemplified in an interview with the musician when he comes to a personal revelation that would come to define rock’s authenticity as a genre based on the raw

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 222

aspirations of the musician rather than the expectations of culture-“Being a musician means getting to the depths of where you are at. And most any musician would try anything to get to those depths.”<sup>16</sup>

*Try anything* is an attitude essential to the unheralded success of the three great rock festivals and the musicians who made them possible. Whether these words were synonymous with drug usage, political sentiment, or musical composition, *try anything* was a fundamental belief embedded in the minds of the musicians who, like Dylan seemed to descend from an otherworldly place as avatars, ready to stamp their legacy on 1960s rock culture.

### ***Music as a harbinger of cultural change***

French Musicologist Jacques Attali deftly explains in his book, *Noise; The Political Economy of Music*, how music is a multifaceted medium of self-expression—one that is intrinsically linked to both the artist and the socio-political currents in which the music is created. One of the most important points he analyzes is the notion that, as emphasized earlier, music is often a creative vehicle or catalyst of future cultural events. A quote from the author encapsulates the argument that the music culture proliferated by the so-called Summer of Love in 1967 was the product of certain iconic musical precursors:

Music is prophetic. It has always been in its essence of herald of times to come. Music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world. Undoubtedly, music is a play of mirrors in which every activity is reflected, defined, recorded and distorted. That is why the political economy of music is not marginal, but premonitory. The noises of a society are in advance of its images and material conflicts. Our music foretells our future.<sup>17</sup>

Attali’s eloquent statement provides the perfect segue into a discussion of the final macro event which directly influenced the development of the Summer of Love. Both the Beatles’ first American performance and Dylan’s transformation into a folk-rock artist at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 illuminate how specific artists used musical innovation to change the nature of American popular music. However, as Attali explains music “is a way of perceiving the world,” an idea which provokes the notion that music is not simply about the artist, but about the underlying cultural perceptions

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 223

<sup>17</sup> Attali, *Noise*, 11

which shape the artist's world view. In this sense, the musical innovation of the early 1960s cannot be wholly explained through the lyrics of "Maggie's Farm" or "Like a Rolling Stone;" one must analyze the ideologies underlying the liberal youth culture which influenced Dylan in his creation of such earth-shattering rock 'n' roll songs.

In order to fully understand the links between the counterculture and the rock 'n' roll revolution, in particular how the hippie was truly an embodiment of the Beat Generation's lost quest to imagine an alternative vision of America, it is necessary to highlight the significance of drug use in bringing forth the cultural revolution. In particular, drugs played an integral role in both building a community of adventurous, like-minded individuals and expanding the boundaries of the musical art form. Hallucinogenics did this by providing the individual, both musician and non-musician, an outlet for enhanced self-expression which transcended the limitations imposed by the ordinary, day to day regulations of popular culture. The definition of those regulations is intentionally vague, as the socio-political regulations were myriad, unwritten and built around the fundamental credo of *preconceived expectations*. Whether those expectations reinforced heterosexuality, supporting America's international conquest, using college education to settle a family in the suburbs and build one's material wealth, or living within the ennui of the puritan ethic, expectations were the predominant law of the land.

In presenting an alternative vision of the world, free from the shackles of expectation, one had to consciously rebel. By 1965, a restless youth culture looked to music, the most accessible outlet for rebellion, and saw the pioneers of rock 'n' roll breaking down the boundaries of tradition. Yet while rock 'n' roll music was successfully pushing away the constraints of popular culture, its existence was nonetheless legally and culturally restricted within an unsavory, thoroughly-repressive reality. There seemed to be a missing link—a medium through which one could temporarily alleviate the pressures of feeling insignificant within a mechanized, mass-oriented culture. Seemingly out of thin air came the drugs—illicit substances used to expand the mind which had existed for so long within the underbelly of American society. Thus far overlooked by the mainstream, most likely for



their deviant connotation, yet perhaps for the simple reason that the perfect combination of demographic and personal desires had never correlated with the collective need to chemically alter the mind.

### ***LSD, the seeds of a countercultural identity, and the Acid Test***

In hindsight, it makes perfect sense that drug use would become an integral component of 1960s counterculture and the music it produced, for one has to only glimpse at the artistic rebels of post-war America to observe an ongoing trend--that of innovation and drug use. The Beats took Benzedrine to stay up for nights on end, feverishly arguing philosophical stances and gallivanting around the country listening to black jazzmen who were equally high on the heroin which allowed them to blow other-worldly, anguished solos from their horns. The unheralded poetic compositions which Dylan wheezed away at, staring eerily into the distance with glazed over eyes, were a product of meticulous reading, extraordinary talent, and most importantly, heightened introspection induced by marijuana. These artists understood that drugs could assuage the banality of conservative culture while helping them explore their talents from a potent psychological perspective that was existentially rich. This type of mind-altering experience, induced by whatever drug, struck a resonant chord within the liberal youth demographic, specifically in the San Francisco Bay area—the epicenter of the ensuing countercultural explosion. However, it was one notorious event in late 1965 which catapulted drug use from a localized recreation to a national craze by time the Summer of Love arrived nearly two years later.

The role of LSD, or “acid,” would become an integral component of rock-culture by the mid-1960s as a vehicle of mind expansion—its mythical status was enabled by the countercultural notion of experimentation and the try-anything attitude. Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann created the drug in the late 1930s, yet its effect was not realized until April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1943, when Hoffman spilled a small amount of the liquid on his skin. For the next few days, Hoffman experimented with small doses of the drug and reported both a “terrifying experience in which objects assumed grotesque, threatening

forms” and a euphoric experience where “kaleidoscopic, fantastic images surged-every sound generated a vividly changing image.”<sup>18</sup> Hoffman later proclaimed-“I see the true importance of LSD in the possibility of providing material aid to meditation aimed at the mystical experience of a deeper, comprehensive reality. Such a use accords entirely with the essence and working character of LSD as a sacred drug.”<sup>19</sup> The age of LSD had begun; a drug which not only allowed a person to step away from reality, but also indulge in a transcendental psychological experience which could temporarily paint an alternative reality in the mind. As author Neal Hamilton explains, LSD use would eventually proliferate because “The mystical experience induced the possibility that somehow LSD could breakdown the ego and end the prevailing confrontational attitude most Westerners had towards the natural environment.”<sup>20</sup>

While LSD would not become a recreational drug for nearly twenty years, psychologists began treating patients with mental disorders with the drug and found that many patients experienced “mystical enlightenment” and changed their lives accordingly.<sup>21</sup> Such epiphanies often resulted in the embrace of contemplation, the rejection of conformity and materialism, and the realization that personal and social issues could be solved through the creation of an alternative cultural structure. By the early 1960s, LSD was still a local phenomenon—a mind-altering treasure of the New Left. By 1965, however, the term hippie had been coined as the sweeping definition of this new wave of counterculture living which had emerged along the West Coast. Two men in particular must be noted as the catalysts in transforming this regional counterculture into the age of the hippie through their outspoken reverence for the evocative powers of LSD.

Timothy Leary, known as the “high priest of LSD” was a Harvard psychologist who promoted “psychedelic drugs as a means to expand consciousness, change personalities, and reform

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<sup>18</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 189

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 189

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 189

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 189

society.”<sup>22</sup> Leary was a man of many interests who combined travel, eastern religion, existentialism and psychology to write extensively about the benefits of hallucinogenic drugs in reaching one’s own unconscious in order to “liberate society from its stifling conformity and violent barbarity.”<sup>23</sup> Leary saw himself as a visionary prophet who “crusaded” against mainstream society to prove that psychedelic drugs would help to change society’s behavioral tendencies. In terms of his work, Leary often administered psilocybin mushrooms and LSD to students or followers to teach them about the transcendental qualities of reaching the unconscious. For most of his adult life, Leary preached the motto “turn on, tune in, and drop out,” a double-entendre which embodied using LSD to turn on to a mystical experience by breaking down the ego of the individual and living as a brotherhood well outside the limitations of the mainstream.<sup>24</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum, Ken Kesey was an individual who followed a path similar to that of Jack Kerouac by rejecting his all-American upbringing—an athletic, intelligent man who bypassed the traditional path to promote countercultural ideals. Similar to the coincidental realization of LSD’s effects by Hofmann, Kesey’s life was unexpectedly changed when he volunteered as a subject for the testing of LSD in a California hospital in 1959. Kesey experienced many of the same mystical effects of LSD as Leary, and used the drug as a basis for his writing which critiqued mainstream conformity’s stifling of the individual and the false prophecy of technological and material advancement.<sup>25</sup> Again, like Leary, Kesey spent his time promoting LSD both as a way to realize the shortcomings of mainstream society and to encourage the deconstruction of the individual in order to promote an alternative universe of peace-loving ideals. However, more than any other “LSD prophet,” Kesey should be considered the most significant innovator of widespread LSD use,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 179

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 179

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 179

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 171

for he and his theatrical troupe of “Merry Pranksters” exhibited to the world the life-changing potential of acid one night in late 1965.<sup>26</sup>

After touring the nation in a psychedelic school bus teaching the public how LSD could “deprogram individuals of their addictive conformist behavior and open new doors of perception to reveal life’s beauty,” Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters held an acid test in San Jose, California.<sup>27</sup> At around midnight on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1965, thousands of kids poured out of a Rolling Stones concert and were greeted by a handful of colorful characters in costume who handed them leaflets with the challenge-“Can you pass the acid test?”<sup>28</sup> The dare held a promise of adventure and directed the intrigued youngsters to a dilapidated house filled with a multitude of theatrical characters who were handing out the “elixir” which was said to “open the doors of perception, revealing something wondrous; the essence of reality, or being, or nothingness.”<sup>29</sup> After years of nation-wide quests to enlighten the population, Kesey and his “ad hoc cast of freelance lunatics and genuine artists” had brought to fruition the acid test—an event which would help to fuel the ensuing countercultural revolution.

In 1965, LSD was still a legal drug, and the Pranksters took advantage of this fact by spiking various drinks at the test with massive quantities of the drug in hopes of sharing and proliferating the wonders of a new cosmic consciousness.<sup>30</sup> In a macro-sense, Kesey was reintroducing America to existentialism: “the belief that a person or people collectively have freedom of choice and can rise above limitations and reshape the world,” a philosophical concept treasured by the New Left since its founding in early 20<sup>th</sup> century French literature to its integration into 1950s Beat ideology.<sup>31</sup> Such an enthralling combination of philosophical vision and drug-induced self-knowledge was the key behind LSD’s popularity in the grander scheme of 1960s countercultural proclivity for revolutionary change.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 172

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 172

<sup>28</sup> Miller, *Flowers in the Dustbin*, 235

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 235

<sup>30</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 172

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 97

Yet during this first acid test, the scene was all about the present, and Kesey focused his experiment by enhancing the drug's natural ability to give rise to heightened sensory experience. The house was filled with auditory and visual elements used to enhance the shock effect of the unexpected such as light machines, movie projectors, randomly activated drum machines, and tape recorders connected to a loudspeaker which would play back strange, fleeting sequences of audience noise.<sup>32</sup> Yet the main attraction was the Grateful Dead, a San Francisco band who combined the contemporary pop-rock sound of the Rolling Stones and Beatles with classic African-American r & b while adding their own unique twist—long, psychedelic, electric guitar-infused jams. They were, and always will be the beloved, original rock 'n' roll jam band. The Dead, still mostly unknown at that point, used the acid test as an opportunity to convert and expand their following, in many ways similar to the “coming out” party for the drug itself. From then on, the Dead would form a lasting, symbiotic relationship with Kesey and the drug which opened people's eyes to the incredibly captivating, free-flowing and totally euphoric sounds of Jerry Garcia's psychedelic rock—a genre which would soon after proliferate throughout California.

Kesey's Acid Test was iconic in more ways than one as the event symbolized a micro-precursor to the harmonious relationship that would rapidly form between hallucinogenic drug experimentation and the developing musical style of live, free-form rock. Moreover, Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters were the first to publicize the “try anything” attitude towards hallucinogenic drugs and their natural ability to expand one's consciousness. This tenacious claim which attacked popular culture's affinity for mundane, self-limiting expectations was in many ways similar to Dylan's defiant electric experiment a year prior. The tender infancy of this new idea--the euphoric combination of acid and rock—can best be described as a “greater cosmic consciousness.” This new interpersonal awareness, termed a “collective heartbeat,” was synthesized by the deep relationship formed between Garcia and the enthralled audience.<sup>33</sup> Kesey himself considered the Acid test an “art

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<sup>32</sup> Miller, *Flowers in the Dustbin*, 237

<sup>33</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 173

form—a total experience with all the senses opened wide--” in short he was right, as acid would come to symbolize rock culture’s experimental and spontaneous personality. Experience was the heart and soul of Kesey’s life quest, and his open reverence for the transformative qualities of acid would change the lives of the various sub-cultures living within the underbelly of 1960s society.

### ***The hippie as a colorful augmentation of the Beat aesthetic***

By early 1966, something remarkable was brewing well under the radar of America’s conservative elite. The Beatles had brought the rebellious rock ‘n’ roll through their newest album *Help!*; an innovative compilation heavily influenced by the early psychedelic sound of acid rock. Dylan had successfully torn down the established barriers of genre-oriented American music by belting out the lyrics to “Like a Rolling Stone--” a masterfully crafted and symbolic “screw you” to those who scoffed at the nature of change lurking hungrily within the shrieking distortion of electric guitars. Timothy Leary and Ken Kesey had thrown aside the false candor of the “American Dream” for the allure of LSD’s alternative universe; stoned prophets watching as their virgin test subjects reached a collective enlightenment all while swaying to the never-ending groove of the Grateful Dead. From beatniks to disgruntled teenagers to Hell’s Angels, acid provided an outlet for ambitious minds to collectively envision America’s future as a clean slate. Thus the music, the drugs, and the attitude had captured the imagination of a restless youth population—a potent combination of countercultural lifestyle strikingly reminiscent of the Beat Generation ten years prior. Yet the Beats had never achieved their goal of bringing forth a liberal revolution for the sole reason that their lifestyle was neither accessible, nor hopeful. Taking a closer look into the Beat “aesthetic” and comparing it with this new countercultural sentiment of the 1960s provides fantastic insight into how the hippies would adapt old countercultural ideals into a more efficient and accessible platform for change.

The solidification of a well-crafted countercultural attitude and identity played an equal role to the drug-induced expansion of consciousness in the development of the Hippie Movement. Well before 1967, hippies as they were later described, theoretically consisted of the liberal youth

population who lived in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood around 1965. Although the term hippie is nearly synonymous with the Summer of Love, it was during 1965 when Michael Fallon, a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle* coined the term in a story about a hipster coffeehouse in the Haight called the Blue Unicorn.<sup>34</sup> The attractiveness of the term is that its definition transcends the characterization of a single person—rather it is an archetype of the second notable, post-war countercultural movement which took America by siege in the mid-1960s. In terms of a general definition, the hippie was a symbol of a countercultural vision which espoused “love, peace, drugs, and community. Despite this common ideology, hippies lived in many different ways and their society changed over the decade.”<sup>35</sup>

The similarities between the hippies and their Beat Generation predecessors are striking, and touching upon a few examples helps in developing the argument that the hippie aesthetic was directly influenced by the earlier Avant-Garde movement, yet augmented in a fashion to suit the hippie ideals of community, peace, love, and vivacious musical innovation. In Fallon’s article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, he likened the “strange denizens to the beatniks and hipsters who had recently inhabited nearby North Beach. Like their predecessors, this new group turned away from middle-class society.”<sup>36</sup> The vision of the Beats as expressed through their literature had a profound effect on the hippies, and liberal minds more generally to this day. In a fantastic synopsis of the Beat’s legacy which in turns provides insight into the hippie aesthetic, author Anthony DeCurtis exclaims:

The Beats have become cultural signifiers for the promise of personal freedom. The drama of their story intensified as that promise, at least in part, proves illusory and crashes against the borders of what reality will allow. Different as they are from each other, they stand collectively as a wild, alternative

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<sup>34</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 148

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 148

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 148

vision to the soul-deadening track of conformity...their vision resonates deep in the American soul and the American past.<sup>37</sup>

Clearly, there is an undeniable link between the two great countercultural movements of the post-WWII era, as the angst of Dylan's protest-riddled lyrics and the psychedelic rage of Hendrix's guitar evoke visions of Kerouac's cross-country odysseys and Ginsberg's "swirling, rhapsodic verses." Spontaneity, going against the grain, and the endless search for the unknown romance of yore are aspects of each movement's basic identity—an effervescent, vivacious identity which screams existentialism and living life with the notion that death is lurking around the corner.

The last similarity is the most prevalent in forming an argument that the Beat Generation influenced the hippies in terms of artistic self-expression; self-expression which was then effectively channeled into rock music. As author Parke Puterbaugh explains, "The real legacy of the Beats had less to do with passing along stylistic approaches to music, art and literature than with offering a bold, forthright template for revolt and uncensored self-expression."<sup>38</sup> This point alone rings true in terms of how the hippies adopted an aggressive, anti-government socio-political stance, as exemplified in their pacifism, eastern mysticism and anti-war positions. The links between the use of mind altering drugs, the attitude of defiant independence and musical self-expression cannot be underestimated in their importance to the development of rock 'n' roll. Firstly, Beat icon Lawrence Ferlinghetti describes the prime element behind the two movement's shared key to unlocking and expanding the mind's creative capacity: "For the first time, American writers and artists were turning on with psychedelics rather than alcohol."<sup>39</sup>

One of the most powerful taboos and understated aspects of American artistry by the 1960s was the significance of the role that drugs played in artistic innovation, be it Surrealist distortion of mundane objects or the far-out weightlessness of tracks like "Flying" from the Beatles' acid-infused

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<sup>37</sup> Holly George-Warren, *The Rolling Stone Book of the Beats: The Beat Generation and American Culture* (New York: Hyperion, 2006), 343

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 362

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 363



album *Magical Mystery Tour*. In terms of 1960s rock culture, the socially scandalous nature of art built from drug use was dually confounding to and defiant of the natural state and affairs of the American music industry. Unlike mainstream pop, “the rock bands of the San Francisco scene were less drawn to fame and fortune than to breakthroughs on the level of consciousness, creativity and an unfettered lifestyle.”<sup>40</sup> Evidence of this trend towards consciousness and innovation is supported by some of the most iconic musicians of the early San Francisco rock scene who cited the Beats as a prime source of creative influence and of the exotic freedoms associated with a “try anything” impulse. Jerry Garcia cites his love of free-flowing art and a seemingly never-ending tour schedule as an extension of Kerouac’s *On The Road*—one can almost hear Kerouac’s breathless tale of adventure in Garcia’s dynamic solos. Similarly, Grace Slick, the diabolic vocalist for one of the quintessential psychedelic era groups, Jefferson Airplane, credits the Haight-Ashbury scene to the legacy of Beat rebellion: “I think it was a reaction against the Fifties which were extraordinarily boring and stiff. Compared to the Sixties, it was like being asleep.”<sup>41</sup> Finally, in an all-encompassing analogy of the ensuing Summer of Love, Bob Weir, the rhythm guitarist for the Dead captured, the essence of the hippie ideal through the lyric “The bus came by and I got on. That’s where it all began.”<sup>42</sup>

The countercultural revolution of 1967 was in many ways as colorful an augmentation of the Beat “free-wheeling lifestyle” as it was the acid-soaked brainchild of Ken Kesey and the Grateful Dead. That being said, the wholly unique flavors of the hippie movement were truly a special brand of self-expression based upon positive vibes, a functioning community of “outcasts” and forward-thinking liberal ideology. All three of these characteristics had been foreign concepts to the dark, scornful sentiment of the Beats and became the ultimate determinant in the movement’s transitory cultural relevance. To the Beats, art was life, but life could never be art. The jazz session is symbolic of the Beat era: “the musicians straggled in, blew together for a moment and then left, back to the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 363

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 361

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 361

private hells of their own pads.”<sup>43</sup> The quote paints a vivid picture of how Beat reverence for art, whether it be jazz or personal narrative, was intense to the point of madness—a self-destructive war path whose genius was incompatible with reality. Thus the hippies acknowledged the failures of the preceding Avant-Garde movement and simply reversed them as so: “The main contrasts between the Beat and the hippie eras are in terms of isolation vs. community, opposition vs. separate-but-equal relationship to the Establishment, social apathy vs. activism and pessimism vs. optimism.”<sup>44</sup> Undoubtedly there were obvious differences, yet the relationship was reconciled through the universal language of music—a cross-generational means of creative expression which can be seen as the definitive parallel between the two countercultural movements. While the Beats and their beloved genre of jazz may have faded from the spotlight by the mid 60s, the “live in the present” passion of the Beats and the improvisational language of jazz reemerged in the consciousness of the hippies as the fresh, commanding sound of rock. As we will see, the genre was built to last by a generation with a ravenous desire to use music as a creative means to pursue and celebrate change.

### ***Everything comes together—a cultural big bang***

The spontaneous rise of the hippie countercultural movement in 1967 was marked by three overarching themes which coalesced into the cultural phenomenon of the Summer of Love: location (Haight-Ashbury), socio-political ideology, and of course, musical culture. Although New York City was a thriving haven of liberal thought, California was the epicenter of revolutionary sentiment. The San Francisco Renaissance of the 1950s had come and gone. The Beat legacy of creative self-destruction and existentialist scorn for the Establishment lay dormant, hibernating under the surface of an increasingly tumultuous era of an American political deceit. What the Beats had lacked in breadth, the Baby Boomer generation made up for in sheer numbers, and any type of simple catalyst would have been adequate in resurrecting a focused and large-scale countercultural movement. Needless to say, by the mid-1960s, America’s ruling class was in dire need of addressing its unjust

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 355

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 353

administration of civil liberties and stagnant arena for popular discourse. Luckily, for history's sake, the Baby Boomers contained every possible element necessary to initiate this profound change: the generation was the largest, by numbers, America had ever produced, they had come to adulthood during a fifteen-year period of reactionary socio-political implementations, and as Grace Slick remarked, "Our generation was the best educated one before or since, we got a chance to observe and experiment with different ideas and art forms."<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps the most effective method of combating the civil unrest, stifling conformity, and the suffocating nihilism that came as a result of endless war, both abroad and internally, was literally to "drop out" as Leary famously preached. By dropping out, one could exist free from the constraints of a mechanized, unsympathetic popular culture. What mattered was applying the deconstructive, euphoric nature of acid to a real-life scenario where creativity would define a free-spirited generation dead-set on changing the world. In analyzing the Summer of Love, the goal is to emphasize how a unique community of young minds came together to redefine the prevailing attitudes towards societal norms that correlated with success and the pursuit of happiness. Because the focus is not on the culture, but rather the music, argument centers on how these redefined attitudes catalyzed an unprecedented era of artistic growth. This growth was founded upon the simple notion that the emotive power of music could free the mind from the dark veil of impending doom which surrounded American life during the 1950s and 1960s. More specifically, rock music was a celebration of pure individual talent, a rare cultural entity not based upon social class, race, or opinion. This fact is the focal development of this study, for the most fascinating, truly heartening aspect of 1960s culture was the creation of the rock festival—the treasured, lasting product of the Summer of Love which celebrated not only the music, but the culmination of the hippie experience. The foremost purpose of analyzing the Summer of Love is to illuminate the creative processes which resulted in the reinvigoration of an old event—the music festival. The reinvigoration of this popular post-war

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 361

musical event prompted the establishment of rock's virgin outdoor spectacle in the unveiling of Monterey Pop—the original celebration of “music, love, and flowers.”

***The gathering of the “Tribe,” Musical precursors to the “Summer,” & rock's first transformation***

If you probe to the underlying values you can see seeds of a better social order. This was an experiment--it was not bullshit though. Exploring alternative spiritual practices is never bullshit, they are all valid searches.<sup>46</sup>

A strand of heavenly light shone upon those citizens who lived in the bohemian community of Haight-Ashbury, where unabashed freedoms made the mechanized reality of the outside world appear as a figment of the imagination. The notion of existing “freely,” whether it meant conscientious objection to the evils of conservatism, creating music unhindered by the regulations of American mainstream music, or simply dropping out and doing drugs, would become the ideological foundation of those who had made their way to the hippie community of San Francisco before the mass exodus during the summer of 1967. This small enclave in the center of San Francisco was a largely unnoticed bohemian refuge after WWII where beatniks lived in relative harmony with the older, more conservative inhabitants of the area.<sup>47</sup> Even after the hype of the Beat Generation faded, a liberal youth population quietly remained, building its ranks as the years progressed until, almost instantaneously, the neighborhood was chosen as the haven for the countercultural renaissance of the hippies and the Summer of Love.

In reality, the Summer of Love began well before the traditional date of June 21<sup>st</sup> when a spontaneous gathering of local hippies resulted in the materialization of a collective vision. A memory from Gary Duncan of the San Francisco Band Quicksilver Messenger Service paints a vivid picture of the incredibly fresh environment: “The Haight-Ashbury scene was basically an outgrowth of the Beat Generation. Poets and painters, every kind of drug imaginable and every kind of crazy

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<sup>46</sup> *The Summer of Love*, DVD, directed by Gail Dogin & Vincent Franco (New York: PBS American Experience, 2004)

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

motherfucker in the world.”<sup>48</sup> Imagine then when this diverse group came together on a sunny afternoon in January in San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park to hear speeches by antiwar activists, absorb the fiery rhetoric of cultural revolutionaries and groove to the rhythms of the city’s most iconic rock groups. The day was January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1967 and the event was the first ever “Human Be-In,” an event which unofficially began the Summer of Love. Peter Coyote, one of the main voices of the excellent PBS Documentary, *The Summer of Love*, captured the essence of the Be-In, “It was simply a coming together, a gathering of the Tribes, 20,000 people there to reject the traditional path to success and drop out.”<sup>49</sup> Wonderful visual footage of the event allows the viewer a firsthand view of perhaps the first large-scale hippie celebration—scraggly youths with long hair and colorful clothing hold hands and frolic in the park as music plays and acid-prophets rant.

The scene is absolutely mesmerizing, and to both those who experienced the event and those who see it unraveling for the first time, the audience can collectively realize that a profound change in lifestyle is coming together. The event brought together the best minds and music of the countercultural movement, combining the written word of Timothy Leary and Allen Ginsberg with the psychedelic sounds of the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane. While celebrating the creative forces of these artists, the audience “handed each other flowers, incense poems, and drugs; and engaged in “ohm” chants and Hindu rituals to stave off evil spirits.”<sup>50</sup> The point of the Be-In, as it was with the ensuing summer, was not to celebrate the individual but the self-expression of the community as a whole—a totally new conception of group appreciation based upon “the people themselves, coming together and grooving.”<sup>51</sup> In a precise embodiment of the totally “out-there” hippie vocabulary, the *Oracle*, a local newspaper depicts the unveiling of the unheralded event: “a

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<sup>48</sup> George-Warren, *Book of Beats*, 361

<sup>49</sup> *The Summer of Love*

<sup>50</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 26

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 26

Renaissance of compassion, awareness, and love in the Revelation of the unity of all mankind. The Human Be-In is the joyful, face-to-face beginning of a new epoch.”<sup>52</sup>

The unbridled excitement of being present during this outdoor celebration, the first large-scale party reveling in the spontaneity and hope of the hippies’ alternative vision of society is omnipresent in the air of Golden Gate Park. In watching the films of the event, the viewer can almost taste the colorful energy that bursts through the camera lens. Interviews with those taking part paint a vivid picture of the collective euphoria—“This whole hippie thing, the whole human aspect, its really happening down here. I was so stoned a didn’t know where to go but people took care of me until I was sober. All the dreams you have of the ideal things, they’re happening there.”<sup>53</sup> Another interview with a writer for the *Oracle* elucidates the reality of growing up in America during the 1960s while justifying the hippie plight—“These people have a united purpose, they have found a viable way of life. There must be a destination--look around, nothing works, a kid can join the army, go to war, become a vegetable, uptight and frustrated, what joy is there in life. Life should be ecstasy.”<sup>54</sup> Even the *New York Times*, America’s most well-respected source of current events and an index of popular opinion, reported favorably of the Be-In, beginning its article with the statement “The new hippies want to change the world.”<sup>55</sup> Universally positive feedback from national media sources only helped to spread the love of the hippies, willing anyone and everyone to make the trip to the countercultural gathering point of Haight-Ashbury to partake in the mass celebration of this new lifestyle.

There were no visions of grandeur, at least in the sense of entitlement, which found their way into this first hippie gathering—the Human Be-In was simply a celebration of the creative fertility found in the San Francisco scene. As the first symbolic event of the Summer of Love, the Be-In would be remembered by those who were present as a “gathering of the Tribes.” The notion of “the Tribe” would become the centerpiece of the new countercultural movement, and in retrospect, the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 26

<sup>53</sup> *Aquarius Rising*, Online Database, directed by Pierre Sogol (San Francisco, 1967)

<sup>54</sup> *The Hippie Temptation*, DVD, no director listed (New York: Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., 1967)

<sup>55</sup> *The Summer of Love*

Tribe would be considered the authentic group of individuals who embodied the hippie aesthetic. This original group of hippies lay down the foundation of the vision that would define the liberalization of the late 1960s and the overarching attitude behind every resulting countercultural movement to the present day. Michael McClure, known as the “prince of the San Francisco Scene” masterfully encapsulates this new sentiment: “Those who believed in the Tribe knew in some secret place in their awareness that it didn’t matter whether it lasted or not; a spiritual occasion has a set of laws other than the ones that extend the life of the one-dimensional society.”<sup>56</sup>

In hindsight, McClure’s statement was more prophetic than it may seem at first glance, for while rock music and liberal sentiment would transcend the limitations of time, the pure, unadulterated “hippie aesthetic” of the Tribe was truly a fleeting vision of alternative living. In order to present the ensuing summer’s events as a two part process while asserting a subjective argument, the analysis is split into a two pronged synopsis, with the focus on analysis of the specific evolution of culture and music rather than a linear historical summary. The first section explains the formulation of the pure hippie aesthetic, rock’s fusion with folk and British blues-rock and the beginnings of an exodus to the “New Mecca”—Haight-Ashbury. The second section covers the notion of hippie excess, the importance of acid on rock culture and the increasing significance of the rock concert as the ultimate culmination of the hippie aesthetic. The analysis is supplemented by the three films introduced above, which provide a firsthand look at the nascent counterculture. These vivid cultural artifacts reveal the movement’s historical relevance from the perspective of both those who took part in the summer, and those who looked on in horror and disgust.

### ***Early Summer, Rock’s first transformation, the “Tribe” emerges in Haight-Ashbury***

Whenever in doubt, turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream.<sup>57</sup>

Perhaps the quote which best typifies the authentic hippie aesthetic is this line from Timothy Leary’s bible of psychedelic living. It reveals how hippie life embraced Eastern religion and thought

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<sup>56</sup> George-Warren, *Book of Beats*, 360

<sup>57</sup> Timothy Leary, *The Psychedelic Experience* (New York: University Books, 1964), 251

through the vehicle of LSD. A rare documentary entitled Aquarius Rising illuminates the application of Leary's mantra in the form of the first hippies. The film is a precious cultural relic of the short era of hippie life before the movement became accessible, and ironically mainstream to a nation of impressionable youths. In wonderfully outlandish fashion, the film begins by covering the first Human Be-In as the narrator goes on a fictitious historical rant emphasizing a revolution in the making: "The Greeks and Indians were the first to speak to God, using Soma. Their sacred teachings were passed down to Jesus and John the Baptist and the Jews known as Essenes, or the children of the light. Then the Christians came along to destroy the teaching of this sacred clan and the descendants of the Essenes hid their sacred library in hopes that it would be found at the end of the age of Pisces."<sup>58</sup> By 1967, the Age of Pisces was coming to a close, and to the narrator, this new hippie generation represented a second coming of the sacred clan, able to speak to God through the power of LSD. Regardless of how ridiculous the mythic tale may seem, these early bohemians truly believed in the transcendent nature of acid, whether it meant speaking to God, or simply understanding one's existential self.

The film then spends the rest of its first chapter covering the plight of these early "flower children." The ensuing reaction from a conservative nation helps to espouse the notion that the mainstream public was not only stubborn in its stiff conservatism, but also ignorant of the purpose of reevaluating social norms. A brief section displaying footage of the "Sunset Strip Riots" of 1966 illuminates how the creative will of the flower children was repeatedly quashed by disapproving LA authorities with police brutality. The riots themselves were a response by local youth to the city's strictly enforced curfews at popular rock clubs like Whisky a Go Go. The riots became symbolic of a new form of active protest against the infringement of civil rights and would be remembered as the influence for local band Buffalo Springfield's legendary hit, "For What It's Worth," an archetype for

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<sup>58</sup> *Aquarius Rising*



the rock-oriented protest song.<sup>59</sup> As the Aquarius Rising depicts, generational clashes such as the Sunset Strip Riots catalyzed the construction of a popular stereotype of the average hippie, characterized by disgust and disdain. However, the overarching point of this section of the film is to purvey the notion that by the onset of 1967, “the spirit of hope, so long imprisoned, was now released.”<sup>60</sup> The section ends with a statement by a local high school principle that is latent with scorn and symbolic of the almost laughable misconceptions of hippie culture by the older generation—“they’re drug addicts, they’re dirty and they don’t bathe, they wear this long hair and these awful, colorful clothes--they must be homosexual. Themes that interfere with our knowing people like the hippies revolve around drug use. I don’t condone the drugs, but sometimes I look at myself in the mirror and say boy, you are a pious hypocrite, you say don’t break the law, but you know, you do, and so do your friends.”<sup>61</sup> However, the statement illuminates that hope does remain, as the principle steps back and takes a look at his own life, realizing that his disgust, for the new culture is hypocritical, perhaps even unwarranted.

Building upon this ideal of hope, the film then focuses on a concrete example of how the hippie aesthetic can function in a peaceful and self-sustainable manner. The setting is an LSD commune in “the mountains of a Thousand Oaks” outside Hollywood, and the natural, idyllic environment is complemented by the euphoric melodies of the Beatles’ “Strawberry Fields” playing in the background. The leader of the community expresses how the gathering of Tribes was not by choice, but by the natural affinity that like-minded people have for deconstructing the individual and living an unhindered lifestyle of love and existential bliss. Moreover, in a counter argument to the prevailing notion that hippies were simply disrespectful social miscreants, the “patriarch” sheds light upon the true, inclusive function of an alternative lifestyle—“I can’t live in a place where every time I want to take off my clothes I need to go hide behind a bush somewhere to keep people from busting

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<sup>59</sup> Cecelia Rasmussen, “Closing of club ignited the ‘Sunset Strip riots’” *The Los Angeles Times*, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 2

<sup>60</sup> *Aquarius Rising*

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

me from what's natural. There are too many restrictions in the real world—who's to say this is morally right or wrong. In living up here were not shutting out the world were just living together where its easier for us to live. The gates are wide open.”<sup>62</sup> Continuing with this explanation of the hippie vision, the leader intimates the original purpose behind the LSD trip: “LSD is a psychic vitamin. It simply shows you how you can be and how you are when you're in an open, unified state. When the effect of the drug wears off you then have some understanding of that state. We really respect everyone's right to take his or her own trip. When I drop acid I get a really together thing with people, I feel like they're part of me.”<sup>63</sup>

Conceivably the best example of this positive energy comes when two cops walk into the commune looking to break everything up—after a few minutes of finding nothing incriminating, the cops seem to temporarily forget their authoritative identity, chatting with the group and finally departing with grins, and consequently, changed attitudes. If the Beatles' “Strawberry Fields” was based upon a real location, it most certainly would have been “the commune in the mountains—the first born strawberry fields.”<sup>64</sup> Before ending the scene, the camera zooms in on a gathering in the hillside called the “Renaissance Pleasure Fair,” a colorful and exceedingly bizarre reenactment of a fictitious English fair of the 1580s. The festival is filled with minstrels, bagpipers, female choirs and strangely-clad actors marching in processions. The colors and characters are so vibrant and diverse, it is nearly impossible to tell actor from audience member. Yet, as the film portrays, such eclectic events were wholly common in the realm of a fresh countercultural spirit during early 1967 where the celebration of art and community were paramount virtues in the isolated alternative universe of the hippie.

Aquarius Rising portrays the emergence of an alternative vision adopted by the hippies before the simple, introspective lifestyle became tainted by excess and mass consumption. These bohemian communities set back in the hills of interior California presented a lifestyle choice founded upon

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

diverse, regional flavors of liberal ideology that embodied old Beat ideals with a fresh, positive outlook living outside the realm of the mainstream. This platform revolved around the basic structure of seclusion in a natural environment, virtues of peace, love, and community, and most importantly, a passion for artistic expression as enhanced by the heightened self-awareness induced by LSD. Such a sacred reverence for the drug's ability to induce a form of spiritual enlightenment is embodied in the introspective words of a man living in the mountain commune—"Acid is a very religious thing, it is a religion in itself. It's like learning to accept God without question. When you start witnessing the universe all around you, you are aware of all energy levels. Things we can hear and feel, energies within the universe, just let it happen and become more and more enlightened."<sup>65</sup> It is hard to argue that this early hippie aesthetic was detrimental in any way to the daily life of the outside world, as the two cultures existed independently. Moreover, the feeling one gets from the film and the various interviews is that despite being viewed with scorn and apprehension from the outside world, the hippies continue to have no feelings of animosity, leaving the doors open for these naysayers to join in on their utopian community. Ironically, the "true" Summer of Love can be considered the downfall of the mystic, self-sustaining, and non-confrontational roots of the hippie movement. Yet, as explained before by McClure, the goal of the original "Tribe" was to promote a revolution of American ideals that were unmarred by the restraints of popular culture. While a voracious, uninspired youth population corrupted the sacrosanct lifestyle of its founders through mass-consumption with eyes set on drugs and sex, its legacy lived on within the transcendent nature of rock music.

### ***The Original Hippie Art***

Essentially, hippie art is a mosaic of old forms of self-expression channeled through the reoccurring cultural themes of peace, love, drugs, conscientious protest and surreal, abstract elements of Eastern thought. Mind expansion is such an integral component of the hippie aesthetic that the theme is allocated its own section in order to thoroughly explore the way it influenced all aspects of

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid

the countercultural movement. Many of the most iconic bands of the era combined the new form of acid-based rock with more traditional rock sub-genres, yet to understand the quintessential musical product of the hippies, it is necessary to first analyze how the various musical antecedents fused into one, all-encompassing psychedelic revolution.

As explained earlier, the overarching Mantra of hippie art, especially with regard to music, was versed in the bohemian/New Left notion that creativity was determined by breakthroughs in consciousness and the celebration of an innovative form of expression that comes with a lack of expectation or predetermined boundaries. Consequently, fame and fortune were considered jaded desires which hindered one's creative output. The jazz of the Beats had laid down a perfect template for the promulgation of unhindered self-expression in the form of improvisation, yet the genre itself was incompatible with the positive energy circulated by the hippies. In its place came rock, an equally dynamic and infinitely more accessible form of music. Albright asserts, "hippie art carries the idea of art as personal expression to an extreme, yet individualism often blurs into tribal anonymity—it recalls certain historic styles, but often wholly by accident," shedding light upon the motives of the original "Tribe," which consisted of blending historic styles with individually motivated craft.<sup>66</sup> Further exploration of this last point provides deep insights into the growth of the rock genre. Albright continues by asserting an interesting point which hints at rock music's unmatched volatility as both a completely distinct genre and an incredibly diverse recycling bin of prior tastes: "Musically, rock is primarily a development of the folk-soul reactions against the over-cerebral dead-end that jazz had reached by the late Fifties."<sup>67</sup> An accurate point, but what Albright fails to address in his unilateral notion that rock stemmed as a reaction to jazz is that early rock 'n' roll may have been equally susceptible to a dead-end fate if it were not for the hippie movement's quest for the unknown and the unexplored.

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<sup>66</sup> George-Warren, *Book of Beats*, 355

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 355

The hippie's influence on the revitalized and revolutionized rock genre cannot be discounted, as the movement truly represented the lifeblood of the genre in the latter half of the 1960s. Continuing with his argument, Albright exclaims "in the hippie sub culture art and life have become synonymous. Performances retain the creativity of jazz; they are electric, in both senses of the word. The true poetry of the age is in the song lyrics. Sometimes they still reflect some of the old nightmare anger; mostly, they are fresh statements on old subjects like love or such long neglected things as the Dionysian celebration of the universe."<sup>68</sup> Albright's comment is a fantastic synopsis of the symbiotic relationship between the hippies and rock music, helping to explicate the point that rock, both technically and symbolically, was built upon old art forms. However, as a historian of the Beat Generation, he continues to evade the critical point of this thesis--that the legacy of the hippies is less a product of their ability to resuscitate old art forms and more a function of their natural proclivity to advance the American liberal spirit through a wholly "fresh" outlook on life, self-expression and the pursuit of happiness. Thankfully, Albright makes one final observation pertaining to the authentic hippie aesthetic which presents a perfect segue to apply this collective persona by indulging in the music of 1967: "Hippie art is flowing, lyrical, expansive, organic and realistic, at least to the psychedelic vision. Beat art has yielded to an art of sensation—sound, color, and shape. Moreover, this new art is functional and integrated entirely into the daily life of the subculture."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 356

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 357

### **Chapter Three: The Yin & Yang of early Hippie Rock & Culture—Developing the San Francisco Rock Scene**

In visualizing a hippie culture as portrayed through Aquarius Rising and the words of Thomas Albright, one can achieve a general understanding of this early “Tribe” which had spread its vision across California by early 1967. But where and how did the music pervade the very structure of this vision? In a testament to The Wobblies, or The International Workers Union of the World, a movement in the early part of the twentieth century which was one of the first to utilize music as a form of conscientious objection, one of the integral components of the hippie movement was to incite socio-political change, or at least awareness, through music. John Handcox, a leader of the IWW once exclaimed “We will have songs that hold up flaunted wealth and threadbare morality to scorn, songs that lampoon our masters...our songs will exalt the spirit of rebellion.”<sup>70</sup> The profound and relevant nature of this proclamation spoke to one distinct element of the rock music produced by the hippies—that of the explosion of folk-rock hybrid bands which hit the scene after Dylan’s infamous performance at Newport in 1965. Until that day, rock and folk had been, both literally and symbolically, polar opposites as forms of music in the technical sense of playing style and the culture from which the music had sprung.

Dylan’s ingenious fusion of the two genres was not only radical, it forever changed the face of American music so that the central purpose of much of the new music was innovation rather than salability--in itself a paradox as his experiment with rock opened the doors to a whole new demographic of American fans. What Dylan had done was detach himself from the fame, and presumably wealth, that had always been associated with an established musician eventually catering to the needs of his audience. By choosing innovation through folk-rock fusion over the staunch expectations of his traditional folk fan base, Dylan had sent an electrified reaction through American

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<sup>70</sup> Archie Green, *The Big Red Songbook* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007), 3

music, challenging musicians to follow their own artistic evolution rather than the needs of the audience. Dylan's artistic rebellion was a vehicle through which rock could grow. What is important here is that by 1967, rock had embraced, and as a result, defined the concept of fusion. Moreover, in the yin-yang existence of rock as a form of expressive dissent and as a means of exploring the untapped musical resources of the human mind, the former was directly influenced by the potency of folk angst. According to rock historian William Schaffer, "Rock, as folk music of the white middle-class American, did more than fill a cultural void or provide aesthetic interest in otherwise constricted lives...Rock dissolved the everyday rubbish of the young American and revealed his dream life. The message of rock was hardly a secret—it was a rejection of middle-class America."<sup>71</sup> Dylan could not have said it better himself—dissent was an aspect of hippie-influenced rock which often goes overlooked in the face of the commanding presence of the more flamboyant acid-rock.

The center of the rock universe from 1967 onward revolved around the second theme discussed above, i.e. exploring the depths of the mind's untapped creative energy. More specifically, this period of experimental growth should be ascribed to the vast "soundscape" of the guitar, be it acoustic or electric. However, before rock musicians could take advantage of the guitar's incredibly diverse sound as an instrumental reflection of the spontaneous counterculture it had emerged from, rock had to build its breadth as an influential genre. This process was gradual and complex, for it not only included enveloping the flavors of other prevalent musical genres, but also establishing a solid cultural identity via the concurrent hippie movement. As we will see, the two-year long progression of developing a full-fledged identity in music and culture was well worth the wait, for rock-culture emerged as the most revolutionary, effectual, and durable Avant-Garde movement of the post-war era.

Ironically, while Dylan's performance at Newport in 1965 was the pivotal turning point in the development of the folk-rock genre, it was the Byrds, an LA folk group, who first capitalized on

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<sup>71</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 7

this fusion by covering Dylan's "Tambourine Man" later in the year.<sup>72</sup> Like Dylan, the Beatles, and even the Rolling Stones, the Byrds embodied some of the various stages of the rock 'n' roll transformation from 1965 to the end of the decade. Analyzing their music is fascinating, as the group was both a microcosm of the larger evolution of the genre and in many ways, a catalyst for innovation which would help mold rock into an incredibly dynamic symbol of the prevailing counterculture. A brief study of their first three albums mirrors the precise technical rock evolution which coalesced into acid-rock by the peak of the summer of 1967. As was common in the early era of rock, the Byrds began as an essentially American reflection of the almighty Beatles, who, by 1966 had recorded a slew of incredibly successful albums such as *A Hard Day's Night*, *Help!*, and *Rubber Soul*. Covering the evolution of the Beatles is a nearly impossible task, yet it is crucial to note that whether it was their clean-cut covers of American r & b, their early pop rock, their beautiful folk compositions of 1964-66 or their revolutionary psychedelic rock of the late 60s, the group had a profound influence on both culture and the budding musicians who used the band as a muse to jumpstart their careers. It is specifically the Beatles' folk-rock stage which the Byrds' looked to reverently plagiarize, and it is this early stage of the Byrd's career which captured the vociferous spirit of early hippie rock.

Although at first thought the Byrds do not surface as the musical symbol of the hippie generation, their influence on the future of the rock genre was of paramount importance. The success of their first hit, the cover of Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man," simultaneously captured the best of the Dylan/Beatles early sound and helped to develop the template for folk-rock's short yet widespread proliferation.<sup>73</sup> In a testament to the overarching significance of artistic theft, the two chart-topping singles off their first album were both Dylan covers. The major characteristics of the album which made the Byrds' sound wholly unique were the masterful utilization of popular rock techniques plus the clever addition of a continuous and centralized electric guitar rhythm. As author Christopher Hjort asserts, the revolutionary craft was based around three recognizable factors:

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<sup>72</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 47

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 47



McGuinn's melodic, jangling twelve-string Rickenbacker guitar playing—which was heavily compressed to produce an extremely bright and sustained tone became immediately influential. The album also featured the Byrd's characteristic clear harmony singing... Additionally, rock historian Richie Unterberger has noted that the albums abstract lyrics took rock and pop songwriting to new heights; never before had such intellectual and literary wordplay been combined with rock instrumentation.<sup>74</sup>

From “Mr. Tambourine Man” to “I’ll Feel a Whole Lot Better,” the Byrds’ first album introduced a distinct rock sound of the 1960s, built from the clean-twang and brightly colored melodies of the electric guitar, rich harmonies, and gorgeous lyrics that would reverberate through the soundscape of rock’s ensuing expansion.

Three other songs off the Byrds’ next two albums, *Turn! Turn! Turn!*, and *The Fifth Dimension*, render a vivid portrait of how the band’s development mirrored the rock genre’s own growth from 1965-1967. The tune “He Was a Friend of Mine,” of the band’s second album was an adaption of a traditional folk tune inspired by lead guitarist Jim McGuinn’s reaction to the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The song is a somber musical memorialization of an assassination which universally devastated an already fragile nation and points to the lasting significance of socially-conscious lyrics in building rock’s multifaceted identity. Lyrics such as “His killing had no purpose, no reason, or rhyme. He never knew my name. though I never met him, I knew him just the same,” are so simple, yet like the emotive power brought forth by Hemingway’s adjective-less prose, are as touching as even the best of Dylan’s protest songs. Also of the second album, the tune “Turn! Turn! Turn!” represented the combination of potent folk lyricism and melodic rock instrumentation. Pleasant guitar melodies, robust four-part vocal harmonies, and holy lyrics channeled through the hippie vision of peace-loving coexistence elevate the song to the status of one of the most recognizable protest songs of the countercultural movement. The single “Eight Miles High” off the group’s third album, was symbolic of the overall development of the Byrds’ sound and combined McGuinn’s airy guitar riffs and the complex harmonies with the transmutation of folk-rock into a

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<sup>74</sup> Christopher Hjort, *So You Want To Be A Rock 'n' Roll Star: The Byrds Day-By-Day 1965-1973* (London: Jawbone Press, 2008), 24

fusion with the newer concepts of “raga rock” and “free-form jazz.”<sup>75</sup> The experimental nature of “Eight Miles High,” an obvious innuendo for psychedelic drug use, is a definitive example of how the Byrds’ utilized the drug as a creative catalyst to expand the boundaries of rock by mimicking two of the most unorthodox non-rock styles of the 1960s. While the Byrds’ may not be considered the quintessential face of the hippie rock revolution, their original sound was instrumental in crafting the diverse “soundscape” of rock in the late 1960s.

The folk-rock genre subsequently became the original focus of the rock revolution, and nearly every single iconic band of the hippie era found its roots in the hybrid sound. Technically, the genre was built upon the foundation of traditional American folk with rock stylizations heavily influenced by the likes of the Beatles and other British groups. The sub-genre’s widespread legacy during the hippie movement has links to such obscure festivals as the Renaissance Fair in Aquarius Rising and the most popular groups of the San Francisco scene. Buffalo Springfield, the fleeting folk-rock group which would springboard the careers of such renowned musicians as Neil Young and Stephen Stills, taught the nation about the stirring nature of the genre when they released “For What It’s Worth.” As a result, many of the local California bands who had been struggling to find a distinct sound in the mid-60s dove headfirst into the folk-rock craze. As folk-rock emerged out of the patchwork and coalesced with the artistic fertility of the San Francisco Bay area, so too did the fragmented legions of the first hippie “Tribe.” As we will see, while rock music prospered, the concentration of hippie culture was like the tumultuous mood swings of a manic depressive or the split personalities of a schizophrenic: while there were euphoric highs, there were most certainly devastating lows that come naturally with any form of excess.

Perhaps the most important cultural factor which revolutionized the breadth of the early hippie experience was its transformation from a cult-like and isolated band of forward-thinking individuals to a centralized, fully-functioning movement based out of San Francisco. As explained earlier in the film Aquarius Rising, the original hippies chose to live a truly individualistic lifestyle

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<sup>75</sup> Peter Lavezzoli, *The Dawn of Indian music in the West* (London: Continuum, 2007), 155–157

off the beaten path of mainstream society. The various interviews from the first half of the film portray various subsets of hippie communities living in harmony and existing off the earth in a wholly simplistic fashion reminiscent of America's agrarian past. The blissful ignorance of these people with regard to politics and societal norms is truly remarkable—a lifestyle unthinkable to many, yet one that was fully functional, and as one community leader said, “open to anyone” who desired to recreate the American experience. Though, like any other extreme fringe movement, the original hippie aesthetic, beautifully demure and unobtrusive as it may have been, was fleeting. As we will see in the following chapter, the original hippie mystique had become convoluted by the onset of the “true” summer, a fact lamented in firsthand interviews with various patriarchs of the “Tribe.” Yet while Haight-Ashbury by August of 1967 marked the existential death of the original hippie vision, the transition from regional communes to the cultural epicenter in San Francisco gave birth to another revolution that would profoundly impact every aspect of the future of rock music. This revolution was in the form of a simple, recycled idea whose new application would transform the boundaries of rock--the live showcasing of local music, aka the concert.

Before the whisperings of this inclusive and unfettered lifestyle struck a resonant chord with a liberal youth population around the nation, enticing many to make the journey to northern California by June of 1967, something extraordinary was happening to the music adopted by those early hippies. Behind this new cultural ideology was an incredibly creative phenomenon--an intangible, universal energy that was directly correlated to artistic innovation. From the simple acoustic strumming of the hippie prophet in the hills high above the sprawling city of Los Angeles to the reverberation of the Byrds' Jim McGuinn's twelve-string guitar, music was at the center of the hippies' universe. Yet as with any musical genre, publicity is necessary for influence and proliferation—thankfully for rock, there was Bill Graham, the virtuoso rock promoter. Graham, a German immigrant, moved to San Francisco in the mid-60s and after viewing a free concert by the

San Francisco Mime Troupe in 1965, gave up a success career in finance to manage the troupe.<sup>76</sup>

Graham's rise to fame is as coincidental and simultaneously groundbreaking as Dylan's first electric performance or chemist Albert Hofmann's first experience with LSD. In Graham's case, it all began one day when Graham put together a benefit concert to support the Mime Troupe's legal fees after their leader was arrested on charges of obscenity.<sup>77</sup> The concert was a full-blown success and Graham came to the realization that he could utilize his managerial prowess to promote concerts full time. Within a matter of months, Graham used his recent financial success to purchase the master lease for the Fillmore Auditorium, a concert hall which had long represented the musical tastes of the surrounding African American neighborhood.<sup>78</sup> The spontaneous lease of the concert hall should be considered, along with the magical profusion of musical talent in the San Francisco area, as a prime catalyst in the rock revolution; for while Graham was a tough, often disagreeable character, his propensity for finding and promoting talent was akin to the Midas touch.

#### ***Developing the link between rock and the live venue***

The original Fillmore Auditorium will always be associated with the Hippie Movement, for not only was it the springboard for some of the most iconic rock acts of the mid-60s, it was also the focal point of the new countercultural movement which would help to spawn both the Summer of Love and the rock festival. Almost immediately, Graham gathered local talent to perform at the venue in what can be considered the beginning of the live rock concert, a type of entertainment perfectly suited for the dynamic, highly interactive genre. The first performances in December of 1965 ran concurrently with the progress of the various hippie communities depicted in Aquarius Rising—the two cultural entities arguably represent the first cultural seeds of thought which would become established as the Summer of Love.

The counterculture of the 1960s was an extension of dormant liberal ideologies from the previous decade; in the same sense, it is symbolically accurate to consider the various musical

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<sup>76</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 12

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 12

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 12

catalysts from late 1965 onward as pertinent antecedents of the summer of 1967. Most of the musicians who came to national prominence during the summer of 1967 were, if not already performing at some point in 1965, thoroughly influenced by the bands of this so-called “San Francisco Renaissance.” The birth of the Fillmore as the musical nexus for the hippie community in the Haight was the first step in both gathering the most creative minds of the rock genre and fostering the almost mystic power of the audience-artist relationship in an acid-rock environment. This relationship is one of the most significant elements underlying rock’s lasting influence on American culture and a natural process brought to conception by the hippies which typified their love of community—a unique experience that allows musician and non-musician alike to celebrate the ecstasy of self-expression.

An analysis of the enormity of material produced by local San Francisco bands between the end of 1965 and into the summer of 1967 is incalculable. In order to properly chronicle the history of California’s rise to musical fame by the time of Monterey, it is, however, essential to capture a glimpse of the various sub-genres of rock that arose from the early-folk rock template. While the Byrds’ were instrumental in the creation of this template, local bands expanded the already far-reaching boundaries of rock by combining elements of folk-rock, blues, newly-popular pop vocal harmonies and jazz-flavored improvisation. One method for managing the information related to the sheer number of bands stemming from the San Francisco/LA regions is to filter the bands through the telling variables of longevity and revision, i.e. their ability to adapt to a rapidly evolving rock scene. The bands who pass this test represent a prodigious musical tableau of sounds and styles which capture the artists’ abilities to evolve within the grander scheme of rock—they are Jefferson Airplane, the Mamas and the Papas, Country Joe and the Fish, the Grateful Dead, and Janis Joplin.

By 1966, this group of musicians, based primarily out of San Francisco, “was America’s only true reply to the Beatles and the subsequent British Invasion.”<sup>79</sup> This recognition marked an extraordinary feat, for other than Dylan, the early to mid-60s had been completely dominated by such

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 9

legendary names as the Beatles, the Stones, the Kinks and Cream. Although many of these local bands had existed earlier on in 1965 and amassed large followings, events such as Ken Kesey's Acid Tests and Bill Graham's purchase of Fillmore fueled an explosion of talent that grew through the popularity and accessibility of live shows and outdoor events.

The success of Jefferson Airplane was in part a result of the malleability of both the hippie counterculture and the San Francisco rock scene, as their formation represented the cohesion of both old and new talent. The original group, as formed in 1965, produced only a single album, *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off*--a fine prototype of the melodic and earthy folk-rock fusion which they in turn helped to proliferate. The heart and soul of the album was built into the group's cover of the classic folk standard, "Let's Get Together," originally by Dino Valente of Quicksilver Messenger Service.<sup>80</sup> The tune typifies the folk-rock standards of quaint, mesmerizing vocal harmonies, and melodic, twangy, and heavily plucked guitar riffs which contain a spacious weightlessness supplied by reverb and filter effects. Lastly, in masterful fashion, the tune, and the album in general, supplement its technical simplicity with lyrics such as "Hey people, now smile on your brother, let me see you get together, love one another right now" which capture the loving, community-oriented sentiment of the hippie aesthetic. The departure of the lead female vocalist, Signe Anderson, after only this first album would result in the recruitment of the alluring Grace Slick. The dark mystique of Grace Slick provided the group with the artistic foundation necessary to venture into the uncharted territory of acid-infused rock—a genre which they will always be considered harbingers of. Yet the complex tale of early hippie rock would not be complete if one were to ignore the plentiful local talent which flourished concurrently with Jefferson Airplane and aided in supplying the rock melting-pot with potent musical flavor.

The advantage of folk-rock was that it contained a form of expressive volatility unmatched by any previous American genre, for even the instrumental virtuosity of jazz fusion was limited to instruments. The folk influence added gorgeous harmonies, soft guitar melodies, and love-soaked

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<sup>80</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 159

preaching to the clean-cut boy band sound of favorites like the Beach Boys and even the rare pleasantries of the early Stones. Following in the rapid success of the distinct folk-rock sound was the San Francisco band, The Mamas and the Papas. The group consisted musicians of diverse backgrounds in jazz and folk who would foreshadow the Summer of Love with their legendary single “California Dreamin,’” a song which spoke of California’s natural allure. Unlike many of the local bands who would evolve from a folk-rock style to a darker, deeper psychedelic sound, the Mamas and the Papas maintained their signature folky, pop-rock style, showcasing four-part vocal harmony throughout their fleeting career. The band successfully emulated the sound and technique of the early classic rock-era Beatles while Americanizing their sound through the vehicle of folk, “enrapturing audiences with imaginative songwriting and beautifully blended harmonies.”<sup>81</sup> With magnificent elegance, the Mamas and the Papas proved that a “pop-infused” form of folk-rock was a seminal sub-genre of the ever-expanding hippie rock scene. The band’s first album, *If You Can Believe in Your Eyes and Ears* was an instant success, backed by specifically by the emotional intensity of “California Dreamin’.” The album is less instrumentally rich than the early albums of the Byrds and Jefferson Airplane yet it makes up for the lack of technical complexity with the profound energy of the four-part vocal harmony. In less words, the album is simply a gorgeous culmination of inventive lyrics and vocals which exemplify a triumph of the human voice--a feat rarely achieved by the traditionally nasal, raspy quality of folk-rock artists.

The vocal unity and full-bodied sound of each and every song elevated the album to iconic status in what would become known as “sunshine pop,” a genre whose influence on hippie culture should be considered equal to that of more traditional folk-rock, British instrumental rock and soon to be, psychedelic rock.<sup>82</sup> Many of the songs contain an uncanny resemblance to the beloved pop-rock sound of the early Beatles. Music historian Bruce Eder observes that the group was reminiscent of the

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 205

<sup>82</sup> Bruce Eder, "The Mamas & the Papas," review of *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off*, AllMusic.com, Accessed April 10, 2012, <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/the-mamas-the-papas-p4831>

“Liverpool Quartet” not only musically, but also in terms of four distinct personalities within one explosive group:

John Phillips was the pop guru, the architect of their sound and the persona that younger female listeners looked to almost as a fatherly figure. Denny Doherty was the alluring male voice that made women’s heart flutter. Michelle Phillips was the raving beauty, capable of stopping air traffic with just the hint of a smile or a glimmer of libidinal interest in her eyes. Finally, Cass Elliot was the hippie Earth Mother with a heart of gold and a glorious voice. Psychically and in terms of image, they were the ready-made core of a hippie commune on any turntable.<sup>83</sup>

In a rock genre often dominated by raw vocals and virtuoso instrumentation, the Mamas and the Papas brought a radiant aural beauty whose sole-piercing intensity was only rivaled by the masters of harmony, Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young and of course, Simon and Garfunkel. Sadly, while the originators of “sunshine pop” would produce two more albums and help to organize the Monterey Pop Festival, they dismantled soon after due to internal conflicts. Yet the group’s meteoric existence was not forgotten, as their vocal-based style kept the spirit of ‘60s emphasis on gorgeous harmony, from Motown to the Beach Boys, to Simon and Garfunkel surging onwards—a style of music so indicative of the peace-loving ideals of the hippies.

Despite the already broad boundaries of the folk-rock revolution which paved the way for the celebration of rock’s diverse musical palette by June of 1967, there were still three more thematic subsets of the folk-rock genre which would prove integral to the genre’s ultimate rebirth as acid rock. It may seem that in consistently pressing the boundaries of folk-rock, one of the most basic elements of traditional folk was lost in translation—that of protest. This was not the case. The prevalence of protest in song had only evolved from seething folk ballads to a more satirical form embodied in the electrified spirit of rock. Across the bay from San Francisco, a group named Country Joe and the Fish demonstrated how protest lyrics fit seamlessly into the diverse rock template.

Country Joe and the Fish proved that the aforementioned folk influences on rock were not nearly audacious enough—the group brought the biting dissent of acoustic Dylan into the realm of rock. Country Joe’s music was a prime example of the rebellious nature of early-hippie rock—the

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid



name itself was derived from a combination of Joseph Stalin's nickname (Country Joe) and a Mao Zedong statement that the "true revolutionary moves through the peasantry as the fish does through water."<sup>84</sup> The group's most iconic hit, "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin-To-Die Rag" was a dark musical satire attacking the false justification for war in Vietnam and typified the infectious power of a folk-rock protest song. Although the song would not reach its zenith of cultural relevancy until Country Joe's memorable performance at Monterey, its publication in 1965 demonstrated the vitality of musical expression as a potent form of vocal protest—a benchmark ideal of the new countercultural vision.

Satirical protest, like nearly every cultural element adopted into rock-culture, was not a new idea. What it represented was a revamped version of a steadfast American political tool. Iconic rebels of the Left had utilized such a tool in the past, such as the Wobblies in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the Hutchinson Family Singers in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to challenge political oppression. Instead of attacking the Establishment directly, a blunt tactic which often resulted in violence, the general idea was to portray conscientious objection through art and subtle lyrical wordplay. Country Joe's "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin-To-Die-Rag" accomplishes this through a theatrical combination of circus-like instrumentation and silly yet potent oration of perhaps the most imminent topical issue--Vietnam. Behind carnival-esque instrumentation, Country Joe McDonald delivers mocking lines such as "And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for? Don't ask me I don't give a damn. Next stop is Vietnam. And it's five, six, seven, open up your pearly gates. Well there ain't no time to wonder why, whoopee we're all goin' to die!" The song is wonderfully multifaceted: it makes you laugh, cry, and seriously rethink America's purpose, if any, for going to war. There is no better example of a song which not only represented the whimsical, feel good nature of 60s rock but also supported the ulterior motive of illuminating the stark discrepancy between what America's leaders preached and what they actually sought through a vision of military supremacy.

Along with satirical protest, the other potent element of "American" rock which Country Joe contributed to the San Francisco music scene was the ever-widening influence of the electric guitar.

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<sup>84</sup> Hamilton, 69

For nearly a decade, the electric guitar had unabashedly become the rebellious flagship of the rock genre, yet shockingly, even by 1966 one would be hard-pressed to find an American rock band who built their sound around guitar virtuosity. What Country Joe brought was a combination of folk, blues, and touches of country music all built into a rock prototype—diverse American genres spliced together through the raw, distorted twang of the electric guitar. The crunchy blues stylizations of Country Joe foreshadowed the future of American rock which would progressively challenge the technical proficiency of the best British guitarists. Luckily for Country Joe, an invitation to Monterey would expand their limited local following, as word of their empowering and electrified protest music was masterfully accommodating to a youth culture who saw rock as a means to challenge any remaining support towards war in Vietnam.

Is it possible that one group could have seamlessly incorporated each and every aforementioned musical element into their diverse sound? Yes, of course, because that is what music does—it builds upon the past to create something new and inspiring. The Grateful Dead deserve credit as being the most prolific, and certainly most influential local group by helping to catalyze a discernable identity to the rock-culture of San Francisco built around hippie ideals and live-performance rock music. The Dead's role in forging a tangible future for 1960s rock was unchallenged in its breadth and myriad channels of creativity. Their influence can be broken down into three factors: 1. Their technical ability as songwriters and instrumentalists 2. Their symbolic and emotional embodiment of hippie culture as both musicians and cultural icons 3. Their musical vision as a jam/dance band which allowed them to capture both the musical quality of an acid-trip and an affinity for live performances. While their career has always been associated with the drug culture as popularized during 1967, their early career was integral in expanding the diversity of the rock archetype and utilizing this rock archetype to show why the genre was most compelling when played through the medium of live performance.

A quote from Jerry Garcia, the lead guitarist and vocalist for the group provides wonderful insight into the process of the band's growth, and thus the countercultural scene more generally, "in the idiom of the sixties":

See, it's all very strange because we all came from such far-out backgrounds into the rock 'n' roll scene...I think it might be like Phil Lesh [Dead's bassist] was saying the other day. He mentioned that when he had sort of like run out of his musical bag, and things were looking pretty down...and then all of the sudden here was the Beatles movies...it was very high and very up, you know. And high and up looked better than down and out, really...So that for me, my musical bag had run out as well, there was no, like, people who were really interested in bluegrass music and nobody to play with. It was like a bankrupt scene—you never got a chance to play or anything. Any playing the music is a real immediate, satisfying thing. It's like if it's going good, everybody knows it's going good, everybody in the band and everybody in the audience...you know, it's a faster thing. You don't have to worry about the form or anything, it's really cleansing somehow.<sup>85</sup>

Through Garcia's stoned rant, one can interpret how adaptation and free-form grooves were the cornerstones of the band's lasting success. It is these two basic characteristics of the Dead which separated them from any band before or after the San Francisco scene had vanished. The Dead's style was described as a virtuosic sound that "touches on ground that most other groups don't even know existed."<sup>86</sup>

The Grateful Dead's arrival can be described as that rare, "yin-yang" harmony of a group of musicians coming together with both a shared musical expertise and an intangible cosmic connection, or more literally, a deep sense of compatibility similar to that of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. As Phillip Ennis, author of the informative rock chronicle *The Seventh Stream, The Emergence of Rock and Roll in Popular Music* ascertains, "They were prepared for the new thing by the exhaustion of their musical pasts. And they found enough intrinsic musical satisfaction and personal compatibility to stave off the disruptions of ego-clash and money-burn."<sup>87</sup> Technically speaking, the group's diverse backgrounds of folk, bluegrass, blues, country, r & b and classic rock were channeled through the Dead's distinct filter of free-form jazz-rock improvisation. In a sense, their sound,

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<sup>85</sup> Phillip H. Ennis, *The Seventh Stream: The Emergence of Rocknroll in American Popular Music* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan UP, 1992), 334

<sup>86</sup> Lenny Kaye, "The Grateful Dead – Live/Dead," *Rolling Stone*, February, 1970

<sup>87</sup> Ennis, *Seventh Stream*, 335

especially when they ventured into the realm of psychedelia, transcends any form of standard categorization. On top of this, the band members embodied the hippie aesthetic, dedicating their influence to their beloved home of Haight-Ashbury as bohemian prophets, the "first among equals in giving unselfishly of themselves to hippie culture, performing 'more free concerts than any band in the history of music.'"<sup>88</sup> As community leaders, the Dead shunned the false grandeur of the traditional American dream--"Although they wanted success, they did not want to sell out, and in this and their antiauthoritarianism, loose style, commitment to principles, and periodic self-indulgence, they reflected countercultural values."<sup>89</sup> The most significant, non-musical legacy of the Dead was their will to toss aside inhibitions, live in the present, and celebrate a creative cultural vision.

While almost every other local band built their career upon a moderately successful first studio album, the Dead's unorthodox style and improvisational genius was meant for the live realm rather than the studio. By focusing on live performance, the Dead had the ability to transform the root of one song into an infinite number of improvisational variations--a feat that would be adopted as the most exciting and spontaneous element of the outdoor rock festival. The group deftly integrated every possible tangent of rock that could be deconstructed and channeled into the improvisational jam—a guitar-induced groove which ebbs and flows, switching mellifluously between genres and tempos, resulting in the distortion of one's conception of time and space. Without a doubt, the most influential musical vision of the group was their will to propel the vast energy of live performance to the point where it was recognized as rock's ideal medium to showcase unhindered self-expression. Rather than catering to the crowd, the "Dead made their music and waited for audiences to come to them. Perhaps for this reason, in the sixties they never had a hit record, and remained first and foremost a live band, a style conducive to their improvisational music."<sup>90</sup> Through relentless musical experimentation, the Dead helped generate rock music's most cherished byproduct and the focal point of Monterey's

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 335

<sup>89</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 126

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 126

ultimate success—the celestial relationship between audience and musician. As Ennis exclaims, “The most important strategic accomplishment of the Dead, however, has been their success in permanently bonding to their audience,” illuminating an often overlooked quality of performance history, which in reality is the supreme indicator of a band’s artistic success.<sup>91</sup> The Dead were able to transcend the vast limitations of the studio by developing a unique, live rock style that kept the band’s music dynamic and aurally refreshing.

As perpetually echoed, spontaneity is the fountain of artistic vitality: not only does it afford an artist the ideal opportunity to avoid the weighty constraints of mainstream expectation, it also allows one to maintain an enticing element of surprise. At the time the Dead were certainly the most endearing example of how a rock band could be centered on live performance while maintaining a driving force of fresh energy. Not surprisingly, the simple, easily deconstructed template of the Dead’s “jam” style of rock would become the fundamental stepping stone from shorter compositions of folk-rock and blues-rock to the darker, heavily instrumental genre of acid-rock. Moreover, every aspect of the Dead’s early career points to rock’s future. Because of the Grateful Dead, rock was not only a music oriented to live audiences, but a genre which brought a resurgence of cultural significance to the music festival because of its organic quality of emphasizing a deeply interpersonal relationship between musician and spectator.

By mid-1967, a large number of local bands followed the Dead’s lead by building a bluesy, electric guitar-centered folk-rock sound into their normal repertoires. Yet the most significant product which stemmed from this shift from rock as a studio music to rock as a live entertainment was the reincarnation of a rock ‘n’ roll staple—the iconic lead singer—a role which was not only musical, but also theatrical in its appeal. Escaping Texas and jumping headfirst into the rock scene, Janis Joplin would come to define the seminal role of the lead singer, or “front-man” in establishing the full potential of the rock band archetype. What the front-man did to the structure of a traditional band was essential to the ensuing success of the outdoor rock festival, as this dynamic group leader brought an

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<sup>91</sup> Ennis, *Seventh Stream*, 335

emotional identity to the music and served as the ultimate link between the musicians and the audience.

If hippie rock was a hopeful, musical extension of unbridled Beat prose, Joplin's existence symbolized one of the last remaining breaths of the tormented Beat mentality of artistic self-destruction in a music scene steeped in exuberant hippie vibes. However, Joplin was a hippie at heart and her upbringing in Texas supplied her with a knowledge and passion for the musical foundation of rock—the blues.<sup>92</sup> Thus what Joplin's gorgeously tragic voice brought to rock was a refurbished presence of the soulful blues stylizations of rock 'n' roll's black patriarchs. The profoundly emotional blues style, which she projected so precisely through the raspy, enrapturing quality of her sultry voice resonated as so authentically African-American in origin that it is truly shocking to watch footage of Monterey and see that this vocal energy was coming from a thin white woman. While Joplin's story was unconventional as a Texan, she quickly adopted a volatile strain of "hip," becoming an angelic flower-child whose excessive drug use would illuminate the innately morbid tendencies of the rock superstar. Despite her morose flaws, it was clear that Joplin was put on this earth for one particular purpose—to reignite the provocative flame of the rock front-man. A reporter for *Time Magazine* captures Joplin's unique contribution to hippie rock when he depicted her enthralling stage presence—"When she stomps, quivers, flails her arms, tosses her mane of hair and swoops through a vocal chorus with hoarse croons and piercing wails, few listeners fail to get the message."<sup>93</sup> This theatrical archetype served as the unstated power source of the typical rock band, and was one of the fundamental reasons why Monterey elicited such a universally positive response from an audience mesmerized by both the music and the emotive energy of vocalists like Joplin. While the music has always been the object of the festival idea, the front-man has become the adjective: defining the meaning of the music, and espousing an identity for musicians and audiences alike to grasp onto.

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 335

<sup>93</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 161

There was no aspect of the rock aesthetic more important to its transformation from an album-based medium to its ultimate culmination as a genre of the live realm than the enthralling swagger of the lead vocalist. After years of dormancy with the metaphysical death of rock's original rebel, Elvis Presley, Janis Joplin revitalized the visual, theatrical and musical prevalence of the rock group's leadership position. If the actual music is what began to separate rock from its mainstream past into something new, refreshing and culturally indicative, the renewed vitality of the front-man is what catalyzed rock's developing styles into a complete package, ready to be revealed to a live, large-scale audience.

## **Chapter Four: The British sound, acid rock “unpacked” & the countercultural Mecca of Haight-Ashbury**

The Byrds and the Mamas and the Papas brought the harmony, Jefferson Airplane and Country Joe channeled the evocative lyrics of folk into a rock platform, the Grateful Dead exemplified the potency of live performance in showcasing rock’s multifaceted nature and Joplin reminded America of rock’s rebellious roots as a music centered around the audacious front-man—but where was that core, the unadulterated rock ‘n’ roll structure at the center of each and every rock musician’s vision? When rock ‘n’ roll went mainstream in the early 1960s, it was the musicians across the pond who revered, then imitated and finally revived the raucous authenticity of rock’s original sound. The most renowned British rock bands of all time, the Beatles and the Stones, began their careers performing American blues-rock and r & b covers. By 1966, these two giants, along with a slew of recently formed British bands who came to America to propel their careers, had built their success by creating their own material while maintaining a collective sound, coined simply as the “British sound.”

The English rock bands of the mid-1960s added the final technical element that would become inextricably fused with the sound coming from the San Francisco rock scene. The result would be the incredibly rapid proliferation of psychedelic rock. Every single British rock group including the Beatles, who more than any band before or after transcended the implications of genre-based music, utilized the rough intensity of distorted electric guitars as the centerpiece of their rock vision. Without the electric guitar, there would simply be no basic identity around which rock ‘n’ roll could have formed and proliferated—it is what made the music unique, modern and rebellious. While some American groups like the Dead already understood that rock’s bright future was irrevocably linked to the guitar’s unifying rebel yell, it was most certainly these British groups in America whose



love of pure rock ‘n’ roll and affinity for technical guitar playing added the final touches to rock’s blossoming age of psychedelia.

From the sixties onward, there emerged a symbiotic relationship between American and British rock musicians which provided the vehicle for technical innovation based on differing cultural flavors, “From the earliest days, British standards set American preferences. In return, American vigor and exoticism flavored the bland British palate and cultural insularity.”<sup>94</sup> While this relationship was often productive, the ingrained historical competition between the English and their American offspring was fierce and perpetuated through the endless one-upping of rock mastery—“The snob value of British upper-class elegance in language and manners, if not in clothes and décor, was a never-ending source of pleasure and reassurance for American audiences, especially when that elegance carried anti-establishment ideas.”<sup>95</sup> The primary reason why British rock even existed was due to a massive exodus of American r & b and blues-rock musicians to Britain where they were received with rapturous adoration. In Keith Richards’s autobiography, *Life*, it is clear that the legendary Stone’s guitarist built his sound around his passion for the original black bluesman such as B.B King, Muddy Waters and Chuck Berry. The distinct individual style of these blues icons permeated the Rolling Stone’s sound from the beginning. In return, the Stones as well as groups like the Beatles, Kinks, Animals, The Who, Yardbirds and John Mayall’s Bluesbreakers brought their “whitened” blues-rock style back to American shores. With the Beatles proverbial “pulling of the cork out of the bottle,” a flood of English talent invaded and dominated the American scene by 1964. While their reign over American rock was dominant for years to come, it was their full-bodied background in American blues which most directly influenced the rock scene that emerged on the West Coast by the Summer of Love.

What these groups brought to America was the revitalized prevalence of Elvis’ original appeal—that of reckless abandonment, threatening sexuality, huge personality combined with stage

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<sup>94</sup> Ennis, *Seventh Stream*, 328

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 328

antics, and of course, screaming guitar licks. Their appeal with the rebellious, youthful countercultural scene was immediate, as they showcased the ideal qualities of the concurrent creative revolution: “The strong anti-pop, anti-commercial attitudes that characterized these groups were partially expressed in the passion expended on the guitar.”<sup>96</sup> As Ennis asserts, the British contribution to the mature state of rock by 1967 was twofold:

First, these groups accelerated the entire world involvement with popular music which was increasingly a youth music. What had been a despised and frightening cultural compaction of adolescent sex and race-mixing was rendered almost acceptable by ‘the moppets.’ The second contribution was the immense popularity of the British rock band image and its ability to freeze the formal characteristics of the traditional American model. However, in deconstructing the formal model, they formalized in 1964 the live performance rock band led by writer/performer. It must be said that the Beatles were chameleons and magpies partaking of every musical and cultural trend in the 1960s. This statement may be an ungenerous way of describing their own maturing, but that’s what youth culture was all about, continual exploration and improvisation around some steady if general ideals.<sup>97</sup>

While the colorful British rock persona aided in advancing the “try-anything,” rebellious spirit of the mature hippie identity as established by the Summer of Love, it was the actual music which proved crucial in substantiating and expanding the breadth of acid rock through the empowering sensation induced by electric guitars. Instead of covering each and every group (for only two of the British greats performed at Monterey), a brief technical synopsis of the recognizable British sound should suffice as an indication of how their glamorous, guitar-laden style expanded the traditional boundaries of rock. By the mid-1960s, traditional rock ‘n’ roll could be summarized around two central types of beat: 1. The backbeat, rock’s original pulse, where one “drops the first and third beats and accentuates the second and fourth” which derived from African-American styles such as rhythm and blues and jazz. 2. The offbeat, or “two step” which accentuates the second half of every beat--a style originally influenced by country and gospel which soon found itself as the centerpiece of Otis Redding’s rock-infused soul music.<sup>98</sup> Although not at the heart of the San

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 328

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 332

<sup>98</sup> Michael Hicks, *Sixties Rock: Garage, Psychedelic, and other Satisfactions* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 28

Francisco scene, these two prime beats would become intertwined with the slower folk tempo as live shows gained popularity.

In retrospect, the aggressive characteristics of the British sound are considered the ultimate link between the softer, “white” rhythms of the folk-rock scene and the traditional upbeat tempo of African-American rock ‘n’ roll, as the Brits successfully combined the best of both worlds. Musicologist Michael Hicks provides a fantastic technical summary of the British sound which is as complete as it is startlingly complex. In Hick’s opinion, the British sound utilized two principal beat techniques: 1. The rhythmic monad, pseudo-double time, and a derivative of it, the rave-up, aka the energetic drive from the snare-drum’s accentuation of every beat exemplified by the Stones’ songs “Paint It Black” and “Stupid Girl.” 2. The mastery of incredibly rapid tempo as a symbol of energy and action, “speed as an expression of youthful energy.” This was a style perpetuated by the guitar-virtuoso Jimmy Page of the Yardbirds who essentially founded the guitar-crazed energy of the ensuing hard-rock sub-genre, one which would supersede the prevalence of folk soon after Monterey.

Based around these fundamental rhythmic techniques, British rockers built a raucous, bluesy style which incorporated the electric guitar as the primary instrument of creative expression. The British influence on the rock of 1967 can be further categorized into specific micro-influences that became interspersed throughout the prevailing West Coast rock scene by each band. The Beatles used their unprecedented musical ability, both as individuals and as a group, to capture the imagination of American youth by producing a slew of records that not only symbolized their stylistic growth, but also their ability to foreshadow the future of rock music. Their preeminent album, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Heart’s Club Band*, would become the fundamental template through which the psychedelic genre was modeled. The Stones captured the “bad boy” image of rock which would become increasingly prevalent in American music culture, simultaneously threatening conservative America and extolling the uninhibited personal freedoms of the liberal youth population through the vehicle of a music that dripped with sex and experimentation. In the same way that Joplin reinvigorated the relevance of the volatile lead vocalist, Eric Burdon of the Animals combined his larger-than-life

bellowing vocals with wildly enthralling performances from the group's evocative blues cover of "House of the Rising Sun" to their psychedelic reincarnation at Monterey. The Yardbirds and the Bluesbreakers introduced America to the British blues vision while showcasing the early careers of a number of the world's pre-eminent guitar players. These guitarists, such as Eric Clapton and Jimmy Page would utilize the Summer of Love to both propel their solo careers and provide overwhelming justification into why the guitar would become the mainstay of rock's greatest era. The Kink's raw, heavily-distorted grunge style and deviant lyrical wordplay spoke to the limited resurgence of Beat-infused revolt and represented the original template for rock's darker, angst-ridden side which would stem from the hippie's fall from grace. Lastly, the Who, known best for their wildly outlandish stage antics, would emerge from Monterey as the living, breathing symbol of rock rebellion.

The influx of British musicians into the American rock scene just prior to 1967, played a seminal role in the establishment of the provocative front-man as a symbol of live rock's dynamic energy. On top of this, the British sound stimulated the hardening of the traditionally soft-edged, West Coast folk-rock style through the sensory stimulation of the electric guitar. The British sound conquered the summer's music scene, as guitar-laced rock usurped the reign of folk-rock as the defining element of the hippie's psychedelic vision.

### ***Acid Rock: from the studio to the stage***

In analyzing rock's incredible proliferation during the period from mid-1965 to the early days of 1967, we see the fusion of myriad musical elements into a rock "mosaic" leading into the "true" summer. The folk-rock of San Francisco and LA had expanded to include the jazzy, free-flowing improvisation of groups like the Grateful Dead and the rebellious personas of the British bands who emphasized both theatrical flair and the wailing crunchiness of electric guitars. By 1967, rock stood at a critical juncture where its rapidly evolving sound required a new, large-scale live medium to accommodate an ever-expanding base of musicians and fans; otherwise it could fall flat, as the sheer quantity of music was starting to overwhelm the limited media of exposure such as records and small, live venues. The only refutable technique for a flourishing genre to elude the restrictive and generic

realm of the mainstream was to provide relentless innovation as a method of avoiding categorization and maintaining a ferocious energy (such as Dylan had done two years prior). Luckily, rock's propensity for innovation was also emphasized in the ideological structure of hippie culture—a "live fast in the present" mindset which naturally attached itself to creative exploration. Because the hippies adopted the broad umbrella of rock music as an embodiment of their ideals and a vehicle of creative prophecy, it makes sense that their love of community, artistic innovation, and celebrating the fruits of the present would spawn rock's ascension into the festival era. Simply put, rock-culture's decisive contribution of Monterey and the ensuing era of the rock festival was the result of LSD. By experimenting with LSD, rock musician's expanded the human threshold for artistic creativity and simultaneously formed a lasting, mutually beneficial relationship with hippie culture.

While Timothy Leary, the acid prophet himself, may have lost track of reality through his excessive consumption of hallucinogenics, his infamous quote in *The Psychedelic Experience*, "whenever in doubt, turn off your mind, relax, float downstream" was the metaphorical embarkation point for the summer's magical trip.<sup>99</sup> The mantra was as all-encompassing in its cultural scope as dropping acid was in its ability to enhance all forms of sensory experience. Leary's preachings prophesized a full-blown rock revolution in the sense that music was no longer simply an artistic vision, but rather a collective experience which mirrored the day-to-day conduct of life in Haight-Ashbury. The process of integrating acid rock into the already budding rock scene in San Francisco was a gradual group process, yet the holy accomplishment of seizing this sound in its embryonic form and portraying precisely why this was to be the definitive sound of 1967 can be attributed to two artists and their respective albums. Jefferson Airplane's *Surrealistic Pillow* and the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band* forever changed the face of rock and everything it had previously stood for. These two groups, one American and one British, stood as the two facilitators of the psychedelic experience of 1967, as their two albums captured a musical and cultural phenomenon which had been brewing under the radar in California since Ken Kesey's Acid Test of 1965. The

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<sup>99</sup> Miller, *Flowers in the Dustbin*, 251

Airplane's *Surrealistic Pillow* was released on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1967, weeks after the group's psychedelic rebirth at San Francisco's Human Be-In. The band had long been a leading member of the city's live music scene, yet it was the release of this second album which propelled the band's new acid-rock exploration to international fame, fueled by the singles "White Rabbit" and "Somebody to Love."

In similar fashion to Jerry Garcia's earlier quote, Marty Balin, lead vocalist for the Airplane, explained how free-form improvisation was the key factor of their new sound: "Like lots of times we'll be playing a song that might be three or four minutes long. We'll go to the guitar break and Jorma [lead guitarist] will just start creating then and there. We all hear it so we'll just go on with it. Nobody says anything, nobody worries."<sup>100</sup> The tune "White Rabbit" was directly influenced by novelist Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a story eerily reflective of the fantastical events and imagery experienced during an acid trip--such as changing size after "taking pills or drinking an unknown liquid."<sup>101</sup> This song is as bizarre and abstract as it is subconsciously appealing as a lyrical and imagery-rich adventure into the unknown. In the same vein, "Somebody to Love" is a dark tale of psychedelic alienation built upon a hard-rock sound of despairing, heavily distorted minor chords. The album represented the first widely-acclaimed psychedelic-influenced rock album and paved the way for both musicians and hippies alike to venture down the path towards a summer where the acid trip would define a new interpretation of reality.

While the Airplane's *Surrealistic Pillow* is considered a vehicle leading into San Francisco's explosion as the focal point of rock music and counterculture in 1967, the Beatles *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band* is arguably the best rock album of all time. If the Beatles ever reached a noticeable pinnacle in their career, it was firmly established with the release of their eighth studio album, *Sgt. Peppers*. Whether one considers the rich variety of instruments and musical styles, the incredible complexity of vocal harmonies, the seemingly impossible fact that each song is completely

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<sup>100</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 159

<sup>101</sup> Jeff Tamarkin, *Got a revolution!: the turbulent flight of Jefferson Airplane* (New York: Atria Books, 2003), 113.

unique yet fits seamlessly into one unifying musical story, or the theatrical nature of both the lyrics and album art, *Sgt. Peppers* was, and still is the most revolutionary and influential rock album ever created. Hick's statement, "Its immense popularity, critically and financially, beyond the normal bounds of the rock audience firmly established the album as the basic artistic unit for rock performers," speaks for itself in explaining how the Beatles were the center of the expansive rock universe by 1967.<sup>102</sup> The Beatles during their short yet prolific career contained the uncanny ability to continually outdo themselves, tantalizing musicians and listeners alike with music that seemed to transcend the human mind's threshold for ingenuity. It has been widely accepted by the critical community and the public since the introduction of the album that various elements of *Sgt. Peppers* were instrumental in proliferating the overall psychedelic revolution.

Like Jefferson Airplane (yet in a more profound sense), the Beatles utilized both references from popular culture and their own imaginations to create a dense soundscape filled with coherent imagery that was steeped in the mystic experience induced by LSD. From "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" to "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite" to "She's Leaving Home," each tune tells a bizarre and entertaining story. Each story combines a clear narrative structure of whimsical wordplay with perfectly chosen instrumentation that flows from carnival-esque accordions to big band jazz to full classical symphonies to Indian-influenced sitars. The aural complexity is truly remarkable and provides fascinating insight into the Beatles' mastery of album based rock built from myriad musical styles fused into one robust, psychedelic rock landscape. While this multifaceted sound was impossible to capture within the realm of live performance, the various flavors of *Sgt. Peppers* became part of the attraction for the eclectic mixture of artists who found their home in San Francisco during the summer.

Quite literally, every cut off the album was immersed in the bizarre, introspective journey which LSD induced. The Beatles' transmutation of drugs into music was an incredible feat which not only firmly established the drug as a symbol of the quirky San Francisco rock culture, but most

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<sup>102</sup> Hicks, *Sixties Rock*, 62

importantly, proved that its consumption could open the doors to an uncharted world of sonic innovation. A perfect example is the tune “Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds” which is a song whose influence was purportedly taken from an innocent drawing with the same title created by John Lennon’s young son, yet whose acronym of L-S-D seems too obvious to be coincidental. The sonic landscape of the song is unlike any musical composition previously created, combining ethereal vocal harmonies with lyrics that are so wholly expressive that even an elderly WWI veteran completely oblivious to the notion of rock would be compelled to let the images prompt a cosmic trip within the mind. Rightfully so, *Rolling Stone Magazine* described the song as “Lennon’s lavish daydream,” a song built from “nursery rhyme surrealism” which established the notion of *Sgt. Pepper’s* as a “revolutionary, sonic carpet that enveloped the ears and sent the listener spinning into other realms.”<sup>103</sup>

Along with LSD infused narratives and whimsical, sometimes dark instrumental exploration, *Sgt. Peppers* must also be credited with the popularization of Eastern-influenced styles, specifically built around the sitar. The sitar is a classical Indian stringed instrument whose technical complexity (21 strings) creates a rich variety of mesmerizing sound; multiple strings used simply to create the “drone” or reverberating background note hold one omnipresent note floating in space while the player improvises to create a mood and/or build anticipation. The mystifying spaciousness created by the instrument is a product of the drone strings’ natural reverberation, which produces remarkably resounding overtones, or multiple-octave harmonies. The sitar, combined with the sarod (a stringed instrument producing a deep, weighty sound) the surbahar, or bass sitar, the tanpura (a stringed instrument used simply as a supplemental drone) the violin-like sarangi, the santoor (a hammered dulcimer) the pakhavaj (bass drum) and the tabla (melody drums) are the traditional Indian instruments which comprise the extraordinarily rich and wholly unique Eastern sound.<sup>104</sup> It was the

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<sup>103</sup> Jones, *Sgt. Peppers Review*

<sup>104</sup> Smita Tanshikar, “Indian Classical Instruments,” <http://www.omenad.net>. Accessed March 15, 2012



Beatles who brought this wonderfully exotic style of music known as “raga” to the American rock scene via *Sgt. Peppers*. The addition of this style was the product of guitarist George Harrison’s dedication to friend and mentor, the great Indian sitar player, Ravi Shankar. The extent of this friendship’s legacy cannot be overstated, as these two musicians, the premiers of their respective genres, reiterated the yin-yang duality of the summer. In one fell swoop, the best of the West attached itself to the best of the East, bearing the musical offspring known as “raga-rock”—a sanctified marriage of heavily distorted, drug-laden rock with the pious spirituality and gorgeous, melodic harmonies of Indian raga.

In their usual fashion, the Beatles, led by George Harrison in this instance, picked up the raga style with ease and transformed it into a masterpiece which fit seamlessly into rock’s vast mosaic of styles. The development of raga-rock as a relevant style was revolutionized through *Sgt. Peppers* in the form of the tune “Within You Without You.” The most fascinating aspect of the song was simply that such a foreign musical concept could fit in so naturally within the sequence of the overall album. Such a feat speaks not only to the Beatles supernatural ability to incorporate so many diverse genres under the rock umbrella, but also to Harrison’s foresight in realizing that raga music’s spiritual qualities and traditional application as a religious art-form translated into a musical rendition of the introspective experience of LSD.

The final element which *Sgt. Pepper’s* embodied was the fascinating musical integration of a carnival-like vision. Of all the ideas built into the album, the carnival sound is certainly the most bizarre, yet in actuality, the most symbolic of the hippie counterculture blossoming all around. What would coalesce in Haight-Ashbury during the Summer of Love was nothing short of an acid-soaked circus, and yet again, the Beatles had stumbled upon the whimsical sound that would metaphorically define the playful essence of the “hippie aesthetic.” While recording the album, Lennon had exclaimed to the Beatles’ producer, George Martin, “I’d love to be able to get across all the effects of a really colorful circus. The acrobats in their tights, the smell of the animals, the merry-go-rounds. I

want to smell the sawdust, George.”<sup>105</sup> Such a seemingly insignificant thought would end up being the ideological and sonic cornerstone of the album, which in return foreshadowed the summer’s mass-scale rendering of one long, colorful theatrical performance. With the addition of the raga’s spiritual energy, the album was complete, its musicians having laid down the precise template for the abundant future psychedelic rock.. In musing on *Sgt. Pepper’s* remarkable influence on the materialization of psychedelic rock as both an art form and a cultural signifier, Attali’s iconic statement “music foretells our future” should reverberate in one’s mind as a telling synopsis of rock’s ultimate contribution to American society.

It is not difficult to ascertain how these two legendary albums of early 1967 would strike a resonant chord in the collective vision of a hippie counterculture which thrived off of artistic innovation as a means of cultivating a common identity. The combination of acid and music in the studio was an extraordinary achievement that not even the most prolific bands like the Grateful Dead had been able to capture on vinyl. Perhaps the most fascinating legacy of these two studio albums was the fact that the musical vision they captured on record, specifically psychedelia and raga, had been present within the rock culture for nearly two years, unable to expand relative to their true capacity. Thus what *Surrealistic Pillow* and *Sgt. Pepper’s* did to these two musical elements was far greater than simply laying down a template for their technical expansion. By bringing these unorthodox, stream-of-consciousness musical seeds to the studio, these two groups transformed rock’s mature new sound from its existence as a West Coast niche sound to a nationally acknowledged phenomenon—all through the accessible medium of the record. From that point onward, the intoxicating allure of psychedelia was no longer a cherished secret of the original “Tribe,” it was now in the solid form of a record-shaped Pandora’s box—as soon as the needle hit the record, the box would open, enticing the disgruntled youths of the nation, and collectively beckoning them towards the acid-Mecca of Haight-Ashbury. Now that the psychedelic template had been laid down and popularized, other rock

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<sup>105</sup> Miller, *Flowers in the Dustbin*, 257

musicians could deconstruct the studio sound and expand upon the inherent limitations of the record by experimenting with the style through live performance.

Although these two albums represented a microscopic portion of the psychedelic music being produced by the onset of the summer, they served as a widely accessible index, providing a transparent view into the rock culture that was soon to expand from its peaceful roots as the vision of the hippie “Tribe,” to a national craze. To those who lived through the 1960s, the Summer of Love was high on the list of revolutionary happenings which directly effected the future of American culture. From the hippie kid to the tenth-generation wasp, the summer of 1967 would be remembered as a cultural moment where prevailing attitudes were challenged, artistic innovation seemed endless, and revolutionary fervor was in the air—for better or for worse.

### ***The Summer of Love, Haight-Ashbury & The Coupling of Psychedelic Rock With the Live Venue***

But if everything was potentially equal, then everything—music, underground comics, high-volume guitar assaults, delicate raga, anonymous sex, emotional commitment—deserved to be sampled, savored, given a chance to develop. This was, understandably, a little hard for parents to take; and the resulting generation gap, the first that didn’t axiomatically appear to be ‘just a phase,’ was especially deep because on some level, the kids believed at least a little bit of the message their panicky parents were emanating. Combined with the headiness of dope itself, it was easy for kids to think they *would* change, be completely and irrevocably different from their parents’ generation. This wasn’t Peter Pan revisited, either; no nannies need apply. They would grow older, but *better*. Good-bye suburbs, good-bye barbecue, good-bye accountants and loopholes, good-bye beauty salons, good-bye M1 rifles...Hello peace, love and understanding.<sup>106</sup>

The above quote, taken from Ed Ward’s *Rock of Ages*, one of the most comprehensive chronicles of the history of rock, is perhaps the best synopsis of the Summer of Love’s all-encompassing effect of re-envisioning the societal norms as they existed in America during 1967. All at once the seemingly impregnable fortress of popular conservatism was called into question by a youth population considered powerless and insignificant only a decade before. This section focuses primarily on three films which provide a firsthand glimpse into the cultural revolution which materialized in Haight-Ashbury between the inaugural Human Be-In in January and the remaining summer months after Monterey. In a sense, the three films cinematically represented the beginning,

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<sup>106</sup> Ed Ward, Geoffrey Stokes, and Ken Tucker, *Rock of Ages: The Rolling Stone History of Rock & Roll* (New York: Rolling Stone, 1986), 324

the peak, and the end of the summer in respective order. Being films that explore the fluctuating environment of Haight-Ashbury, their cultural focus complements the ensuing musical analysis of the final chapter and reveals why Monterey was the glorious peak of the Summer of Love. The film Aquarius Rising, the previously mentioned amateur film project by Pierre Sogol, is used to depict the harmony of the summer's beginning through the unbiased and unnarrated view of Sogol's camera. The Summer of Love, a retrospective PBS documentary is used to build an interpretation, through colorful interviews, of the summer's peaceful and hopeful prelude to Monterey, and the ensuing rise of dark excesses soon after. Similarly, The Hippie Temptation, a CBS TV documentary created for the purpose of exacerbating popular culture's fear and revulsion of the hippie scene, is analyzed after Monterey to highlight how media sources were bent on denouncing the virtue of the countercultural vision before it even had an opportunity to develop.

These three films are not only informative, but also cover the differing viewpoints of those who partook and those who sat in horror on the sideline--viewpoints essential to understanding how this cultural revolution affected American culture. Most importantly, absorbing the cultural vision portrayed through these films allows one to discern the specific elements which brought cohesion to the various elements rock culture—a crucial unity needed to facilitate the birth of the rock festival. In this complex process, rock culture was thoroughly transformed, displacing the “delicate” hippie aesthetic with the more efficient, albeit vulgar aesthetic of a mass countercultural movement. Thus, the remaining analysis serves three specific purposes: 1. To highlight the mature identity of rock culture and the further development of psychedelic rock 2. To analyze the fruition of rock's definitive contribution to American culture—the live performance and the seed of thought which would become Monterey. 3. To juxtapose the pinnacle of the original vision of the Tribe as it applied to the hippie scene in Haight-Ashbury and its rapid disintegration into immorality, excess and psychological darkness.

In the most blunt sense of the word, everything was *changing* by the onset of summer; the Beatles and Jefferson Airplane had carved out the definitive sound of 1967 in psychedelia and the

Human Be-In had not only proved that the hippie lifestyle could be consumed and enjoyed on a mass-scale, but also established Haight-Ashbury as the capital of American “Hippiedom.” The hyper-expansion of the rock scene, from its gravitational pull which engulfed any orbiting sub-genre to its natural association with the creative energy pervading the vision of the hippie aesthetic, rock’s growth may have been unsustainable if it were not for its centralization in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. In magical fashion, the original “Tribe,” (as it still held true to the Haight’s uncorrupted bohemian residents through the Spring of 1967) the now abundant and increasingly improvisational rock genre, and live venues like the Fillmore and Winterland coalesced into a countercultural Mecca capable of maintaining and promoting the celebratory essence of hippie-rock. Beat angst had been transformed into hippie love, and the key to artistic success meant integrating one’s sound under the broad umbrella of psychedelic rock. Even America’s blonde-haired surfer sweethearts, the Beach Boys, had accepted this new state of affairs, producing the far-out *Pet Sounds*, one of rock’s most influential albums combining sweet vocal harmonies with reverb-heavy psychedelia.<sup>107</sup> In an equally surprising move, the Rolling Stone’s, Britain’s hard rocking, hard partying rebels followed their English counterparts, the Beatles, down the path towards acid-riddled artistry, producing their only psychedelic album, *Their Satanic Majesty’s Request*.<sup>108</sup> Such a widespread revision of the music of the world’s greatest rock bands proved Dylan was valid in noting “the times they are a changin,” an objective fact of the American music industry which inspired many to play with the enhanced creativity induced by hallucinogenics, while destroying the careers of the more obstinate.

Not only did the leading bands of the San Francisco and LA scenes flourish during this time, but the combination of an influx of music-hungry youths and increasing popularity of live performance, both indoor at the Fillmore, and outdoor at festivals in Golden Gate Park proved ideal for new talent whose hyperbolic vision was most potent on stage. The Doors, led by the diabolic

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<sup>107</sup> Jim Miller, *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll* (New York: Rolling Stone, 1980), 196

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 253

prince of acid Jim Morrison, dove headlong into the depths of psychedelia, producing a live sound eerily reminiscent of *Sgt. Peppers*. What is important to note here is that while the Beatles may have popularized the thrilling sonic landscape of an acid trip in the studio, the budding genre, like its free-form predecessor bop jazz, was conclusively linked to the freedom of live performance. Thus, the story of acid-rock's rapid growth is connected to the studio by the basic purpose of the studio—to make an artist or a style profitable by turning it into an accessible medium of sound with national distribution, i.e. the record. With the success of *Sgt. Peppers* and *Surrealistic Pillow* this relationship between acid-rock and the studio had been fruitful. From that point on, the acid-rock/studio relationship would settle in the background, allowing the established popularity of the genre to be developed in San Francisco and be celebrated through a live medium. This opportunity allowed musicians to both experiment with improvisation and build a lasting relationship with their audiences.

To comprehend psychedelic rock's psychological attachment to the live stage, one should consider Hick's assessment of the fundamental effects of LSD: "*Dechronicization* permits the drug user to move outside of conventional perceptions of time. *Depersonalization* allows the user to lose the self and gain an 'awareness of undifferentiated unity.' *Dynamization* makes everything from floors to lamps seem to bend, as familiar forms dissolve into moving, dancing structures. Objects become liquid, dripping, streaming with white-hot light or electricity as though the substance and form of the world were still molten."<sup>109</sup> This technical analysis of LSD's effect on the mind translates naturally into the ethereal quality of psychedelic rock, and more importantly, the stage as an open template for artistic expression.

Groups like the Grateful Dead and the Doors capitalized on this fascinating relationship by transforming each psychological term of acid's effect into a specific facet of their live performances. The process of dechronicization allowed the musicians to lengthen their songs while slowing the tempo down, inserting long instrumental "jams," inciting a spellbound reaction from the audience

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<sup>109</sup> Hicks, *Sixties Rock*, 64

through “quasi-hypnotic repetition and the absence of musical goals.”<sup>110</sup> By capitalizing on depersonalization, groups changed the traditional structure of a rock band from the static roles of lead player and accompanying player to a group of musicians who performed both roles interchangeably. Depersonalization was also used to “drown the individual consciousness” by turning up amplifier volume to near excess and using artificial reverberation to “dissolve the barrier between music and listener, making the listeners feel the vibrations of their instruments instead of just hearing them.”<sup>111</sup> This use of volume and reverberation distorted one’s aural perception, magically allowing the music to sound at once directly in one’s face and impossibly far away, “connoting vast, overwhelming oceanic spaces.”<sup>112</sup> By utilizing these two techniques of warped time and space, dynamization was effectively the bizarre offspring, inducing audiences to perceive the hypnotic pulse and spacious sound as strange shapes, colors and objects that had been deconstructed from their familiar forms.

These three radical aspects of acid’s effect on artistic creativity and the mind-blowing result it had on the audience are indicative of psychedelic rock’s natural evolution from the studio to the stage during the summer and hint at why the large scale rock festival would become the genre’s most revolutionary contribution to American culture. To be in a psychedelic rock band meant infinitely more than the insular role of simply performing music; as Jim Morrison expressed with his usual enigmatic tendencies, “There’s the known. And there’s the unknown. And what separates the two is the door, and that’s what I want to be.”<sup>113</sup> To be a psychedelic rocker meant to be an interlocutor between two worlds of perception, deciphering mystical prophecy from the realm of the unconscious and translating it into a musical composition for the amorous masses. During that summer, an interconnectedness between the musician, the audience and the music’s multifaceted layers of both conscious and subconscious sensory excitation had developed through the medium of live performance, an important relationship which would elevate rock to new heights of creative genius.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 64

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 64

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 65

<sup>113</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 83

How did psychedelic rock integrate itself into the culture, and why was San Francisco chosen as the house of the holy? For one, San Francisco was, and had been for some time the focal point of both post-Beat bohemianism and musical innovation. Secondly, San Francisco had always contained that vague yet captivating air of mystique as an ocean-side oasis of the mountainous West Coast. Lastly and in a literal sense, the city was known for its bustling literati population, liberal institutions such as Berkeley and a radical, youth oriented environment that differed from “High-pressure New York or Brahmin Boston, maintaining its ‘anything goes’ ethic.”<sup>114</sup> These strains of liberal thought had come together in the early 1960s, with many of the remaining Beats seeking refuge after their movement’s demise in the low-rent Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. The radical energy of the city had produced the Free Speech Movement, the Folk Revival, and by 1967, the full development of the San Francisco Renaissance which had metamorphosed into the hippie-built Summer of Love.<sup>115</sup> The term which best described rock’s rise to musical supremacy was spontaneity. This term became the motto of the Haight-Ashbury “live in the present” lifestyle, and as author Ed Ward explains, spontaneity was the lifeblood of the summer’s success—“New York had had ‘happenings’ long before San Francisco had its first ‘Be-In,’ but even when the audiences became part of the action, happenings were *performances*.”<sup>116</sup> Ah, performances, the word used by Lennon to express his will to have *Sgt. Peppers* capture the bizarre theatrics of a carnival and the term used here to denote the celebratory atmosphere of the summer. Performances, be it carnivals, Be-Ins, or rock festivals were an omnipresent element of the summer’s existence, cultivating the notion that this special summer was one never-ending, all-inclusive theatre production. If “Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds” was John Lennon’s “lavish daydream,” then the Summer of Love was that lavish daydream’s earthly reception.

As Aquarius Rising validates through its grainy footage, the daydream of a psychedelic reality truly did exist. Through this footage, one can notice that the theatrics of the summer did not exist solely on the stage or even in the park, as the camera provides a montage of the brightly-clad

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<sup>114</sup> Ward, *Rock of Ages*, 328

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 328

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 329



flower children prancing through the streets, handing out flowers, incense and food while watching parades zoom by with live music playing in the background. The Summer of Love was truly as much about the streets as it was the stage, as hippie children from across the country claimed the cement-paved walkways as their home—with such a massive influx of people, houses or even roofs were a rare luxury. Thus the streets themselves were an ongoing spectacle, as people with nowhere to go figured they might as well take advantage of the free ground and temperate climate as a means to celebrate the community of which they were now ostensibly a part. The beauty of Aquarius Rising is that it lacks any narrative, utilizing sporadic interviews and footage to paint an unvarnished picture of the revolution which was occurring. The film is a fairy-tale-like firsthand look into the culture, omitting the biases and viewpoints that come from a retrospective study, creating a cinematic environment where the viewer feels as if he or she is actually part of the events. Just as the film's earlier sections provided insight into the original creation of the hippie aesthetic, the final section on the summer illuminates the overarching reign of yin, or the weightless harmony of the cultural movement in its most virtuous phase of existence during the early summer. To supplement this intangible feeling of goodness, the film depicts the literal events which made the summer truly memorable, such as the wandering crowds in the streets being fed for free and a hippie wedding in Golden Gate Park consecrated by the holy sacrament of LSD and the statement "A piece of paper doesn't make the marriage, love does and the people do."<sup>117</sup>

What the film does best is capture how the Summer of Love was truly a movement of the common people and thus a movement that was built from the natural energy of a community rather than a singular voice. This social reality emphasized the experience of LSD in deconstructing one's preconceived expectations and the impact of society's conventional structure and behavioral standards. This unusual dynamic created a situation where even the local rock superstars lived within the Haight-Ashbury community as everyday residents. In a scene from the documentary The Hippie Temptation, an interview with the Grateful Dead expands the hippie notion that even musical icons

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<sup>117</sup> *Aquarius Rising*

simply viewed themselves as supporters of the greater good: “What were thinking about is a peaceful planet, no revolution or war, we would like to live an uncluttered, simple life. Move the human race ahead one step. Most of the people who came to the hippie movement got there through drugs. Expanding your consciousness comes from drugs. There’s no war or problems that the larger society has. We’ve all grown up together.”<sup>118</sup>

In a similar vein to the developing relevancy of the musicians’ bonds with their audiences, the footage from *Aquarius Rising* portrays the notion of “oneness” among the members of the physical community and the multifaceted elements of their psychedelic rock culture. Moreover, one gets a sense from the film that everything has finally come together “to affirm and celebrate a new spiritual dawn,” justifying the cultural prevalence of a three-year period where “the hippies had been trying to build an alternative society dedicated to living life as a spiritual and psychedelic exploration, where straight society’s greed and materialism would be left behind.”<sup>119</sup> *Aquarius Rising* captures this symbiosis, and in cinematic form, affirms the hippie view that ideological change was possible if only enough people believed in the transformative power of music and the inherent goodness of mankind. The point of the film is simple—to capture the development of a unique liberal movement in its purest state before it was all said and done. In this sense, its lack of vocal opinion allows the events which it captures to feel natural and unrestricted. Whether Sogol used the film to purvey a certain opinion or simply to maintain a concrete memory of the phenomenon, we will never know. What is certain, however, is that the film sheds light upon the gloriously positive environment of the summer when living the hippie lifestyle was synonymous with spontaneity, respect and community.

The positive vibrations of the summer are a telling aspect of life in Haight-Ashbury, yet they are not indicative of the whole story, as the specific cultural and musical developments reflected the culture’s process of growth of musical passion and loss of moral purity. *Surrealistic Pillow* and *Sgt. Peppers* had established psychedelic rock as a national craze almost overnight, yet in terms of the

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<sup>118</sup> *The Hippie Temptation*

<sup>119</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 294

Haight-Ashbury scene, the carefully produced sounds of the studio did not correlate with a lifestyle based on spontaneity and live performance. During the summer, rock music was established as a live music and the legacy of the San Francisco scene was that it “remained largely unrecorded and local, and, to some degree, deliberately amateurish, rejecting slick professionalism as an article of hippie faith.”<sup>120</sup> Such a significant change in the genesis of rock music from the studio to the stage mirrored the determination of the local hippie community to maintain its authentic roots through spontaneously created music and art. However, this latter desire to remain true to its radical roots was less successful, an aspect of the summer which Aquarius Rising seems to miss. The film which best captures the reality of the summer’s dual-consciousness is the PBS documentary The Summer of Love which evokes through its footage and narration the overarching reality of the summer’s many excesses, both positive and negative.

The documentary offers wonderful first-hand insight into how the deep channels of counter-cultural sentiment provided the fundamental catalyst in transforming the idyllic, utopian sentiment of the liberal community of Haight-Ashbury into a full-fledged cultural revolution. The film’s most informative quality is its ability to juxtapose the harmonious rise of the summer’s community-oriented artistic vision, which peaked by the time of Monterey, and its ensuing fall from grace by August when the huge influx of “newcomers from the outside” consumed or overwhelmed much of the virtue of Haight-Ashbury’s original hippie population. This accurate depiction of the summer’s life cycle incites a deep sense of melancholy in the viewer who feels a sense of longing “for the good old days.” Yet in masterful fashion, the narrator concedes that this enveloping darkness over the counterculture was merely a passing cloud, as rock-culture’s resilience survived its many challenges and by reverting to its most basic elements—music, and an ideology of change.

As explained earlier, the “true” summer began on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1967, when the Human Be-In, a “simple coming together and a gathering of the Tribes,” sparked the first wide-spread celebration of

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<sup>120</sup> Ward, *Rock of Ages*, 334

a hippie culture which “rejected the traditional path to success.”<sup>121</sup> The narrator then begins a long-winded discourse summarizing the extent of the summer’s revolutionary elements and both the positive and negative aspects of a mass movement:

It was the largest migration of young people in the history of America, all bound for San Francisco in the summer of 1967. Thousands were swept up by a revolutionary movement that would shape American life well beyond that summer. However, the utopian dream of the hippie counterculture and its vision of changing the world through peace and love was threatened by such a mass exodus centering on San Francisco. Those in the park on January 14<sup>th</sup> sought a different world—living gently with no need to exploit nature. This was a simpler way of life, less consumption oriented and more concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of the community. However, people were coming just for the drugs, not the spiritual awakening, straining the resources of the city.<sup>122</sup>

The film carefully documents the stark dichotomy which would form during the summer between the peace-loving, utopian vision of the original “Tribe” and the mass, consumption-oriented desire of youth populations from around the country to take advantage of Haight-Ashbury’s many freedoms. The narrator explains how the Haight-Ashbury scene came to be, and he describes the harmonious co-existence of the small hippie community and its older, more conservative residents before the neighborhood was overrun by the enormous influx of young visitors. Along with footage of the peaceful community and its daily happenings, the narrator summarizes much of the politics and ideology explained in the previous three chapters: “The hippies were the children of the 1950s, their parents had endured war and depression and the future looked bright. Yet beneath the surface lurked an ominous reality: peacetime devolved into bitter cold war, communists were persecuted and the atomic arms race fueled fears of annihilation.”<sup>123</sup> Continuing with this historical lesson, the narrator builds on the distinct parallel between the hippies and the Beat Generation while alluding to the main differences—life outlook and LSD: “The Beats of the 1950s in San Francisco were people outside the mainstream, they rejected the conformity and materialism of 1950s America and took on mysticism, drugs and poetry and moved into the low rent neighborhood of Haight-Ashbury. While the hippies

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<sup>121</sup> *The Summer of Love*

<sup>122</sup> Ibid

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

shared the Beats disdain for corporate America and the politics of inequality and war, the hippies preferred sunshine to the dark of coffee houses and rock to cool, modern jazz.”<sup>124</sup>

While the contextual description is interesting, the film’s emphasis on retrospective interviews with the aged hippies who had built the countercultural revolution from scratch exemplify how rock-culture and the mind-blowing effects of LSD supported a movement unlike any other in American history. An interview with an old hippie, Peter Coyote, sheds light upon the collective belief that LSD could change one’s opinions and beliefs, and thus change the world-“LSD was the fundamental building block to a new way of thinking: Why is there war? What is the power of love? These were the ideas debated by young people. Drugs were going to change the world; if you took acid you would change, feel a cosmic oneness, a colorblind reality, and a sense of community. You wanted to know what was on the other side of the door, a sense of being brought into god’s workshop. You wanted a peaceful planet, an uncluttered, simple life, and a will to move the human race ahead.”<sup>125</sup> Perhaps the most moving and inspirational aspect of the early summer occurs when a group of hippies, in response to a national ban of LSD and increasing negative media attention to their plight, create their own “Declaration of Independence,” proclaiming “We hold these experiences to be self-evident, that all is equal, that the creation endows us with certain inalienable rights, that among these are: the freedom of body, the pursuit of joy, and the expansion of consciousness and that to secure these rights, we the citizens of the earth declare our love and compassion for all conflicting hate-carrying men and women of the world.”<sup>126</sup> This “Declaration” was a naïve but eloquent justification of the hippies’ vision; the creation of their own constitutional document demonstrated that these citizens were not only well educated, but also well versed in the implicit freedoms of the nation’s most essential document of law.

How did this local community respond to the generational gap which they had unintentionally produced? Essentially, the hippies continued to deflect the negative press from national media sources

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid

<sup>125</sup> Ibid

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

and even their own mayor of San Francisco by continuing to live in a productive, self-sufficient manner. The generational divide, which had come into existence by the summer, can be aptly explained through the analogy of a language barrier—rather than experiencing a sense of fear or threat stemming from some specific offense or act of revolt, popular culture was simply perplexed by hippie culture because of the unprecedented differences in its lifestyle from prevailing norms. The hippies of Haight-Ashbury were initially able to develop a wary but positive level of acceptance from both the local community and national media by simply doing what they did best—peacefully coexisting and exhibiting that their core values were aligned with those of the outside world in promoting the common good, however different their application may have been. Thus the strangeness of the characters who were wandering the streets wearing Victorian garb or flowing robes, carrying incense, flowers and drugs, playing flutes, chanting Hindu hymns or partaking in bizarre psychedelic parades was mitigated by the goodness and creativity of their acts.

The Diggers, a theatrical group who took to the streets “emphasizing sharing, condemning private property and selfishness and utilizing theatre to mock conformist behavior and promote revolution” set up daily stations in the neighborhood to distribute free food to the needy.<sup>127</sup> Known as a “hip Salvation Army,” this unique group became a symbolic staple of the community, promoting social change by “putting the word free in front of everything” and reaching national prominence after performing a street parade called “The Death of Money” where marchers carried severed dollar signs on sticks and “six pallbearers wearing Egyptian-like animal heads carried a black draped coffin symbolizing the death of greed.”<sup>128</sup> Such bizarre yet socially conscious activism was a mainstay of the community’s day-to-day life and expanded upon the hippies’ vision of a utopian society in the making. Most importantly, the Diggers rejected politically oriented activities, taking an Anarchist viewpoint and rejecting “all but the most informal organization.”<sup>129</sup> This notion that the hippies were founded upon politics is a common misperception to this day; in reality, the original community was

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<sup>127</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 80

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 81

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, 81

staunchly anti-political, as politics were representative of “power games” and power was the downfall of popular society. The Digger’s evoked a profound sense of community through their humanitarian activities and, as a result, they played an integral role in the success of that alternative lifestyle during much of 1967. The Diggers exemplified the powerful yet fleeting notion that social change was explicitly a product of compassion rather than power politics.

Between January and April 1967, the Haight-Ashbury community prospered, as humanitarian groups like the Diggers exemplified the peaceful alternative vision of the hippies, maintaining harmony with the older residents and proving to the media that such an unorthodox lifestyle was in fact sustainable and productive. A perfect example of this significant shift in popular culture’s attitude towards the hippie community comes when the film introduces William Hedgepeth, a “clean-cut” reporter for the general-interest magazine, *Look*. As Hedgepeth explains, before his assignment he had paid “peripheral attention to the hippie movement,” neither intrigued nor disgusted by this new phenomenon. Hedgepeth’s original apathy was transformed almost immediately when he was offered food, shelter, clothing and LSD—his remarks encapsulate the extraordinary power which the hippie aesthetic contained in *actually* eliciting a change in one’s view of life’s greater purpose during the summer:

It would have been completely phony to go out there and then be a total spy and just report on these people. I mean, there was just no sense in that. You know, I mean, this is participatory journalism, you know. It's a dirty job, somebody's got to do it. So, I figured that I was taking these drugs on behalf of the American people, in order to tell them the truth. It seemed to me then that the new phenomenon of hippies was part of a religious movement. They were completely sympathetic and loving, in fact, toward others. They handed out flowers to tourists and naysayers, and people who demeaned them. I was so entranced with it that I thought, well, this is a perfectly good alternative universe to me. I mean, you don't need money, you know, don't need anything. I can, I could stay here if I wanted to. It was as benign an expression of the finer angels of people's nature than I have ever seen before.<sup>130</sup>

Such a transformation in attitude and outlook is not only touching and reverent in its portrayal of this countercultural revolution, but also speaks to the larger cultural shift from staunch conservatism to glimpses of liberal values—a profound shift which was a direct result of the small bohemian community which had come into its own in San Francisco during the summer of 1967.

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<sup>130</sup> *The Summer of Love*

While this gradual and occasional transformation in the national attitude was a product of a mere fifteen thousand hippies living in Haight-Ashbury by the early summer, the true root of the energy that had incited a desire for change was LSD. It cannot be reiterated enough that the summer's success in spreading the prophecy of rock-culture to a national audience was the product of LSD's propensity for creating a communal or unifying identity revolving around three themes: the hippies, rock music, and community—the three basic elements of Monterey. First, LSD helped build the sense of a true community—"Hippies considered LSD an Avant-Garde tool—it elicited spontaneity, the ability to see previously hidden connections and feelings of oneness with the universe."<sup>131</sup> Second, with this community established in Haight-Ashbury, LSD propelled the hippies' ideology towards change—"Once a person took LSD and experienced the mystical, life appeared radically different, which is what the hippies wanted...a change in individual consciousness to affect the larger world."<sup>132</sup> Lastly, LSD was the fundamental building block of psychedelic rock, a genre linked with spontaneity and the artist/audience relationship channeled into the live venue.

As the summer wore on, the incredible number of live performances staged by locals like the Dead and the Airplane and newly formed psychedelic groups like the Doors became so popular that performances by single artists or even multiple headliners seemed inadequate in their inability to capture the pure energy of the genre. Increasingly, the idea of a mass festival embodying the true extent of the genre's international influence seemed necessary. Yet before this could happen Haight-Ashbury would need to be transformed from the center of the hippie universe to the home of the Summer of Love. Such an achievement was well on its way by the early spring, as the relentless fascination of national media sources exposed the bohemian Mecca to the hordes of adventurous youths across the nation who saw the community as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to indulge in the freedoms of sex, drugs and rock.

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<sup>131</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 133

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 133



## Chapter Five: From whisperings of a revolution to a revolution of 100,000 strong— Monterey Pop

Although it was not yet obvious by May, a mass influx of raucous youths from around the nation was descending upon Haight-Ashbury, catalyzed by the media's alluring description of the community as "a naïve haven of free love."<sup>133</sup> This wave of youthful humanity brought with it an onslaught of consumption and moral decay that would effectively devastate the hippie utopia and even threaten the movement's delicate progress towards larger social change by August. Whisperings of this oncoming surge and with it, very negative consequences, were coming from a local leader known as "the Oracle" who exclaimed "please don't come, you will overrun the city."<sup>134</sup> His warnings were unheeded as the positive vibes of the moment subsumed any fear of cultural regression. As The Summer of Love illuminates, other hippie leaders gave public speeches about the proposed Summer of Love in Haight-Ashbury, embracing the notion with confidence and a forward-thinking zeal, "What we have here is a healthy environment, hippies are here for a spiritual purpose. We are not vagrants, we are creative things providing for ourselves. When the summer ends, these people will all go back to their towns and turn on the entire country."<sup>135</sup> What was not to like about the cultural transformation that was occurring on the bustling streets of the Haight? The great psychedelic albums of early 1967 had shocked and simultaneously revolutionized the nation's conception of what was possible to capture on a single rock record, the Diggers had transformed the rigid traditions of societal structure by giving away food and rejecting the world's most basic staple of existence—money. Love was being made in public, music and drugs went hand in hand, and homelessness was associated with peace and prosperity. It seemed as if the world had been turned upside down in that strange and lawless yet lawful community of Northern California by the summer

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<sup>133</sup> *The Summer of Love*

<sup>134</sup> Ibid

<sup>135</sup> Ibid

of 1967. Yet thousands were more than willing to take part in its spontaneous existence and even more were finally content, or at least fascinated to see how long this refreshing bohemian enclave could prosper under autonomy from the big world which surrounded it.

In early May, a song emerged on the radio which stood alone as a potent musical calling, a vocal autobiography of San Francisco written in the present which beckoned the nation to come get a glimpse of its idyllic and peace-loving culture. This song was “If You’re Going to San Francisco,” written by John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas and made instantly into a generational anthem by the vocals of Scott McKenzie.<sup>136</sup> Although the song has become clichéd over the years, listeners who have any knowledge of the 1960s immediately feel a rush of warmth and a sharp visual image of the San Francisco’s emblematic flower children the moment the wispy tinkle of the chimes emerges over the soft acoustic guitar strumming. There is a reason the song will always be associated with the Summer of Love, for the song’s simple structure, anthemic lyrics and sing-along feel were deliberately combined to sell a compact, soft-edged and accessible aural snippet of San Francisco’s virtuous culture to an apprehensive nation. It worked; the tune became a symbolic introduction to the nationalized Summer of Love, bringing a temporary coalition between the original hippie “Tribe” and the vast new “tribe” of impressionable outsiders who trudged headlong into the uncharted territory of their naïve and welcoming hosts.

During May, the term Summer of Love was officially coined when the “Council for The Summer of Love” was formed by local community leaders such as the Hippie newspaper, *The San Francisco Oracle*, and the Diggers in response to the great alarm of local authorities and government officials stemming from the convergence of large numbers of young people in Haight-Ashbury.<sup>137</sup> The council helped to alleviate these fears on the impending immigration by setting up a free clinic, housing, food, sanitation and various music and arts events.<sup>138</sup> There was a hopeful energy in the air, and as the film documents through various interviews, local hippies and summer adventurers alike felt

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<sup>136</sup> Ward, *Rock of Ages*, 372

<sup>137</sup> Allen Cohen, “Council for the Summer of Love,” *San Francisco Oracle*, January, 1967, 1

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 2

this palpable fervor for revolution-“And that was the vision. Every day, you saw scores and scores of people, maybe hundreds of people showing up, just gaping that this was the great place. And this was where they were going to be. Everybody was talking this love, peace; you know, racism was supposed to be really unhip. It was just the little short time, but it was really just like something that shimmered.”<sup>139</sup> Just as Jim Morrison prophesized, the LSD was the vital key to opening the doors of perception, Haight-Ashbury’s confident promotion of the hippie aesthetic to a national audience was the seminal vehicle for promulgating a hoped for, large-scale transformation of national consciousness.

Days after Monterey on June 21<sup>st</sup>, the film opens its lens to a group of hippies ascending a hilltop on a beautiful summer morning to “celebrate the Summer Solstice, the official beginning of the Summer of Love and an affirmation of their connection to the natural world.”<sup>140</sup> Yet as explained earlier, the peaceful relations between the hippies of Haight-Ashbury and the older generation of residents relied upon a mutual respect for each other’s lifestyles; as long as this unspoken respect was maintained, the two populations could exist independently within one community. The original “Tribe” had a history in the community and understood the communal mores and traditions. Unfortunately, the human wave of new youthful immigrants had no understanding or appreciation of those same mores and traditions. The impending youth migration threatened to not only destroy the fragile community’s respect for divergent ideals, but also to devastate the social equilibrium established with time and great care by members of the original Tribe.

While the crossing of the threshold between celebratory yet respectful cohabitation and violation of the delicate community aesthetic for anarchic and deviant excesses was not completely apparent in San Francisco until August, Monterey truly represented the peak of the summer’s artistic and ideological harmony. In hindsight, the Summer of Love represented a critical moment in American history where one generation successfully challenged the established rule of its

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<sup>139</sup> *The Summer of Love*

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

conservative elders. Yet in actuality, the collective dream of change from the youthful counterculture was lacking in historical weight and longevity relative to that of the music which it had embraced as the creative centerpiece of revolution. While the phenomenon in Haight-Ashbury during the summer of 1967 was unheralded in its energy and allure, it was Monterey and its rock music which would transcend the limitations of time and social fashion. One did not need to drop out, take drugs or even consider themselves part of a counterculture to partake in the lasting legacy of Monterey and the rock music it so gracefully helped to expand into the realm of popular culture. Monterey began as a seed of thought and ended as the most important event of the summer, successfully capturing every element of the hippies' utopian vision for one special weekend which celebrated the unfettered life of the present, and most importantly, set rock along the path towards an epoch of musical supremacy.

***From the Fillmore to Monterey; the formal establishment of rock as a live genre***

What Ken Kesey had done in 1965 was simply a social experiment, yet his two Acid tests had inadvertently popularized the two most important elements of what would become known as psychedelic rock: the taking of acid, and the deliberate enhancement of the resulting psychological experience with wild lights, strange noises, and the trippy extended jams of bands like the Grateful Dead. By the summer of 1967, these independent elements--the hallucinatory experience and rock music--had fused into rock-culture and its most innovative musical style. Rock's integration into the public sphere had become so influential that a hip new magazine, *Rolling Stone*, had been created to chronicle its growth and celebrate its cultural impact.<sup>141</sup> Live venues in San Francisco such as the Matrix and the Fillmore had become hugely successful, spotlighting up and coming local talent on a nightly basis. Public gatherings like Be-Ins, dance parties and "freak outs" celebrated rock music's free-spirited expression throughout Haight-Ashbury during the summer. Clearly, rock music had become the center of the hippie's creative universe. Psychedelia was everywhere at once, encompassing every popular style of rock from the ancient, traditional melodies of Ravi Shankar and raga-rock to the colorful, expansive improvisation of the Dead to powerful, introspective music

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<sup>141</sup> Ward, *Rock of Ages*, 373

emanating from the morbid and tormented souls of Janis Joplin and the Doors. Psychedelic-rock expanded upon the hippies' vision of gradual change by incorporating the more urgent "We want the world and we want it now" cries of a rebellious youth.<sup>142</sup> Even though the music was omnipresent, there was a subtle feeling that rock's influence was limited or least not yet fully developed to its full potential through the live medium and thus not living up to the urgency of the countercultural desire for change.

Psychedelic-rock exemplified rock's fluid creativity through the frequent appropriation and augmentation of the work of other artists both living and dead. For example, the Door's wildly provocative and sexually deviant single "Light My Fire" was a direct augmentation of John Coltrane's exotic jazz album *My Favorite Things*, which in turn was directly influenced by the spacious, free form sitar improvisation of Ravi Shankar.<sup>143</sup> In one song, you have three distinct styles of music and three prospering sources of technical innovation all compacted into the new super-genre of acid-rock. All of the necessary prerequisites for fostering this multi-layered musical fusion—talent, time, live performance venues and audiences—co-existed in Haight-Ashbury. All that was needed for its evolution from an idea to a reality was some money and a few creative minds with savvy management skills—impresarios who already understood the dynamics of organizing multi-act concerts. In a community where money was worthless and most everyone was perpetually high on drugs, finding someone with capital, vision, discipline and management skills seemed unlikely. Entrepreneurs, however, were among the many sizes and shapes of humanity attracted to San Francisco in 1967 and some of them became important influences in fueling rock music's widespread success.

Although often forgotten, the term "festival" had been combined multiple times with rock before the advent of Monterey. In January 1966, the now-legendary Tripp's Festival was organized by the face of 1960s rock expansion, Bill Graham, at the Longshoremen's Hall in San Francisco. A

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 366

<sup>143</sup> Hicks, *Sixties Rock*, 60

reenactment of Kesey's Acid Tests, the Tripp's Festival was a large-scale experiment of the mind-expanding experience of psychedelic rock and exterior sensory stimulation. As *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Ralph Gleason put it, the Tripp's Festival was an "electric circus with rock music. People danced all night long, orgiastic, spontaneous, and completely free-form."<sup>144</sup> Later in 1966, a group of diverse hippie artists, ranging from writers to poets to musicians and thespians formed the Artists' Liberation Front--a program designed to accelerate the "wave of artistic creativity that was sweeping the city."<sup>145</sup> Next came the original Human Be-In in January of 1967 and its many offspring during the early summer. These loosely-designed events which had "a profound effect on both the youth-propelled counterculture and the possible staging of a larger, rock-oriented festival," a hippie triumph which forced the national media to view the community and music with a greater respect.<sup>146</sup> These seeds of thought were of huge importance in building the idea of a memorable rock festival, while continuing to demonstrate the power and viability of live music performances which enveloped an ever-increasing fan base and allowed them to participate in the music's coming of age. The explosion of live music performances in San Francisco "forced the observer to come face to face with a growing appetite for rock music in an unconfined, unrestricted setting. Music was a dynamic force ideally suited to bringing people together."<sup>147</sup> The first precursor of the outdoor rock festival was not Monterey, but the Magic Mountain Music Festival which occurred the weekend of June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1967. Its success was immediately forgotten and overshadowed by the release of the first full-blown rock festival only a week later. What this concept did, however, was prove that "if you build it, they will come."

The inspiration for a bigger and better festival had been materializing for months. The only problem was finding the cash and the location which could accommodate upwards of one-hundred thousand people. Often forgotten in the haze of Monterey's enormous success as a symbol of a

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<sup>144</sup> Ralph J. Gleason, "Tripps Festival," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 1966, 2

<sup>145</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 11

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 13

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 17

prospering music culture was the fact that its conception was the product of entrepreneurial capitalists who saw the event as a fantastic profit-making opportunity. The idea behind Monterey came from two business partners, Ben Shapiro and Alan Pariser who raised a significant sum of money to book the Monterey County Fairgrounds for a large music festival, quickly signing on Ravi Shankar and attempting but failing to entice a number of local groups.<sup>148</sup> The capitalist approach to the festival was unappealing to many potential performers. Subsequently, in a magical reversal of fortune, and perhaps indicative of the widespread influence of hippie ideals over traditional business practices during the Summer of Love, the idea behind Monterey evolved from a money-making scheme to an artist-run “non profit festival loosely modeled on the Newport Folk Festival.”<sup>149</sup> When Shapiro and Pariser met with John Phillips, local promoter and front-man of the Mamas and the Papas, and asked his group to join in their plan, he thought back to Newport and “his fondness of his folkie days” and told the men he would only jump on the bandwagon if the festival was made strictly non-profit.<sup>150</sup>

Living and working without a profit motive was the thesis of hippie counterculture, and because the world (at least in San Francisco) had been turned upside down, the hippie’s ideological influence carried huge weight. With Shapiro and Pariser’s capitulation to Phillips’ request that the festival be strictly non-profit, the idea took flight. In a matter of days, Phillips’ own manager Lou Adler had bought out the idea from the businessmen by early May, and in six frenzied weeks accomplished the insurmountable feat of “booking artists, getting the stage and sound systems built, arranging ABC-TV film to cover the event, fully accommodating the artists who were to perform and negotiating deals with the Monterey police force.”<sup>151</sup> Along with these more mundane, tactical plans, Phillips took it upon himself to gather a vast array of musicians, envisioning the festival as a means “to further trends in popular music. The festival could bring together pop, soul, rock, folk, and jazz musicians from all parts of the world to jam and perform, with the proceeds going to a charitable

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<sup>148</sup> Ward, *Rock of Ages*, 374

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, 374

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 374

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 374

cause.”<sup>152</sup> In one fell swoop, the vision of the festival came to encapsulate every element of the burgeoning hippie rock culture which had made it authentic and socially relevant in the first place. The idea of the greatest and most innovative American music festival had come to existence under the name of the Monterey International Pop Festival whose somewhat vague title helped alleviate fear from the local population of what they considered to be the deviant connotations of the term rock. Shockingly, the Monterey County Fairground which had been home to the Monterey Jazz Festival was meant to safely accommodate seven-thousand people. Although there were whisperings that at least double that number would show up, no one, including Adler, Phillips and the Monterey residents had any idea that the venue would house nearly one-hundred thousand strong by the festival’s peak on Sunday, June 18<sup>th</sup>.

### ***The Monterey International Pop Festival***

*The Monterey Pop Festival was the first of its kind. As the first acknowledgement that pop music was building a history worthy of a three-day celebration, it provided the template for the festivals at Woodstock, the Isle of Wight and Glastonbury. As a time capsule of contemporary popular culture, Monterey Pop was the intersection of soul and psychedelia, of commercial pop and the rock underground, of Civil Rights and expanded consciousness, of southern California and northern California, of the southern states and the rest of the United States. It was a festival of amazing good will, of harmony between the city and its weekend visitors, between the police and the hippies, between the artists and the audience. It was the symbolic representation of the ‘Summer of Love’ and the realization of the countercultural ideology which gave the festival its remit of ‘love and flowers and music.’<sup>153</sup>*

*“There was a big shifting of gears. We were off into our new life and Monterey marked the beginning of that.”-Sam Andrew, Big Brother and the Holding Company<sup>154</sup>*

In so many different ways, Monterey became the realization of Lennon’s “lavish daydream” of “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds,” --the spirit of a community built upon the transcendent, introspective experience of LSD. Building on this community ideal, John Phillips and Lou Adler truly succeeded in collecting the most complete index of domestic and international talent under the expansive community of Monterey’s set list. In total, thirty-one groups were set to play the weekend

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<sup>152</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 23

<sup>153</sup> Ian Inglis, *Performance and Popular Music: History, Place and Time* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2006), 28

<sup>154</sup> Marley Brant, *Join Together: Forty Years of the Rock Music Festival*, (New York: Backbeat, 2008), 1



of June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1967, including local talent such as the Dead, the Airplane and the Byrds, international superstars such as the Who, Ravi Shankar, and Hugh Masekela and up-and-coming groups like the Jimi Hendrix Experience and the solo artist Otis Redding.<sup>155</sup> Perhaps the most telling feature of the set list was that it did not include the three most influential rock acts of the era: The Stones, the Beatles and Bob Dylan.<sup>156</sup> All were invited yet declined for various reasons. It is interesting to contemplate the notion that the exclusion of these three rock greats may have been part of a greater cosmic fate.

Perhaps Monterey symbolized the fact that rock-culture was finally maturing and was no longer defined by the aspirations of a handful of musical legends who heretofore had exerted almost monopolistic influence over rock's present and future. One thing is clear—Monterey not only amplified the careers of the groups who consisted of psychedelic-rock's epicenter in California, but most significantly to the widespread growth of the genre, the festival brought the due respect to new or relatively unknown artists such as Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and Ravi Shankar. The only plausible method of analyzing the full extent of Monterey's impact on the rock scene and hippie culture's expansion into the national consciousness is by picking apart the firsthand portrayals of the event, as they served as the cultural artifacts which maintain the images and descriptions and emotions of the people who took part in the event. Specifically, these primary documents are D.A. Pennebaker's concert film *Monterey Pop* and *Newsweek* journalist Michael Lydon's incredibly descriptive essay "Monterey Pop: The First Rock Festival." The two sources inadvertently complete each other, for while the film provides wonderful footage of a select group of performers, Lydon's piece follows the festival in chronological order, filling in the gaps of the documentary. Because of this fact, the sources will become intertwined during the analysis in order to present an informative and linear portrayal of the festival. Through these documents, the energy of Monterey becomes almost palpable

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<sup>155</sup> Miller, *Flowers in the Dustbin*, 261

<sup>156</sup> Santelli, *Aquarius Rising*, 27

forty-plus years later, as they chronicle the precise moment in American history where a fragile countercultural vision first aligned in relative harmony with a distrustful and apprehensive nation.

None of the organizers or local authorities involved in the Monterey festival anticipated the human flood that was about to descend upon the festival site. Along with its obvious allure as an opportunity for youths to congregate, take drugs, and listen to the best talent the rock world had to offer, Monterey was built up by the media as rock-culture's ultimate test of cultural authenticity. Pete Johnson, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* wrote an article in the June 4<sup>th</sup> edition proclaiming that the festival had the power to expand rock consciousness and free it from its ties to financial gain: "Its success can mean a triumph of art over money for a profit-spawned medium, the capping of a trend towards respectability which the field has been approaching for seven years."<sup>157</sup> For a socially conscious group like the hippies, this publicity was fantastic, demonstrating to previously uninterested citizens around the country that this hippie festival had the makings of a respectable and radical vision of cultural magnitude. By the afternoon of Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, every highway leading into Monterey was congested with long-haired flower-children who would fill the total capacity of the venue before the festivities even began with thirty thousand present by that night and an astonishing sixty-thousand or more still to come. Monterey had begun.

As revealed in Pennebaker's documentary, Monterey Pop, the concert provided room for the rock star and the virtually unknown, for the domestic band and the international artist, and for literally any artist who could fit his or her sound under the broad, multifaceted umbrella of rock 'n' roll. Pennebaker's film is beneficial for every viewer; for those who were lucky enough to be present at the momentous occasion, the film "has kept the festival's sound and images from fading in memory."<sup>158</sup> For the rest of the population, it captures the reality of an event which the younger generation would otherwise only have known by hearsay or newspaper or television coverage. The film begins with a short interview with a young, blonde-haired girl who seems to naturally embody

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<sup>157</sup> Pete Johnson, "The Monterey Pop Festival," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967, 1.

<sup>158</sup> Lydon, "Monterey Pops," 1

the free-spirited nature of the Summer of Love, as she exclaims, “I’m so excited. It seems as if the vibrations are just going to be flowing everywhere.”<sup>159</sup> The spontaneous interview is a wonderful introduction to the music which follows. Next the camera zooms out to create a montage of the diverse crowd at the concert, marked mostly by young people with flowers in their hair, all of who are smiling exuberantly. There is clearly an effervescent energy infusing the festival and its excited crowd.

Scott McKenzie’s “San Francisco” is playing in the background, psychedelic art pervades the montage, and vivid colors dominate the variety of loosely fitting clothing on those in the audience. The camera pans to a quick glimpse of the artist Country Joe testing out the PA system, who exclaims, “Oh wow. Finally a good sound system. Groovy.” The film then cuts to an interview with a local police officer who nervously says, “I’ve got to protect myself. There’s a lot of talk of the hippies and the Hells Angels and the Black Panthers coming down. If we do get fifty-five thousand people coming down, there’s going to be a lot of problems.” Finally, the camera captures the hippies wandering around aimlessly, dancing, and swaying to the music in drug-induced trances.

The festival began on Friday night with an eclectic set of musicians who established the atmosphere of Monterey’s incredibly diverse soundscape. The first group, the Association presented a finely-tuned, harmony-rich folk sound that sounded like a combination of the Byrds and the Mamas and the Papas, providing evidence that the folk-rock genre was alive and prosperous. Quickly, the earthy and mellow environment was augmented by the booming vocals and distorted guitars of another virtually unknown group of Canadian origin—the Paupers. As Lydon exclaims, “The little-known group managed by Albert Grossman was able to get a screaming volume and a racy quality unmatched by some of the bigger groups,” foreshadowing the exciting reality that there would be many surprises during the busy weekend.<sup>160</sup> Like the Association, the Pauper’s brought a sound heavily-influenced by stars of the rock genre; in the Pauper’s classic rock ‘n’ roll style one almost

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<sup>159</sup> *Monterey Pop*, DVD, directed by D. A. Pennebaker (New York: Criterion, 1967).

<sup>160</sup> Lydon, “*Monterey Pops*,” 26

immediately hears the British flavor of the early-Beatles as well as the Animals. Just as the audience settled in with the quintessential rock 'n' roll sound of the Paupers, Lou Rawls, an extremely talented blues singer, took to the stage.

While acid-rock had taken the nation by storm in 1967, one of the most prolific, yet underappreciated genres of black soul and r & b also prospered as the next generation of the legendary Motown scene. It was a testament to Monterey's breadth that under its white, "pop-rock" connotation, artists like Lou Rawls appeared with great confidence and enthralled the audience with powerful vocals and even greater stage presence. Lydon's description of Rawls is so evocative that even without sound, one can almost see and hear the artist's commanding performance—"To watch him was to be back at the Apollo Theatre, where rock is flashy, stylish, and flamboyant. 'The blues,' he said as he came offstage exhilarated, 'is the way of the future.' Rawls, a solid member of the professional black school of music, had his finger on a key truth: The blues is the music that makes a universal language."<sup>161</sup> The truth of Rawls' words could not be more accurate, for as quickly as folk would dissipate from the palette of hippie rock, the blues would emerge with unrivaled ferocity in the guitar-work of some of the most talented rock stars—a few of which emerge later in the festival. The two groups which would cap off the first night were two of the biggest names in the pop-rock scene: Eric Burdon and the Animals and Simon and Garfunkel. Lydon's colorful description aptly complements the live footage of both memorable performances.

Pennebaker chooses an eerie, almost subliminal montage of rapid, close-up facial expressions as the cinematic introduction to Eric Burdon and the Animals. The montage is representative of pop art's rise to fame, which began during the Summer of Love and spread quickly from the colorful bohemian scene in Greenwich Village. As the camera pans out from bizarre projections of taut facial expressions, one gets a glimpse of the group while being aurally serenaded with a fierce and ominous violin solo. Suddenly, the frenzied energy of the violin becomes subdued as "Eric Burdon, one of the best white blues singers around, catapults into 'Paint it Black,' the Jagger-Richards masterpiece that

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 27

Burden, unbelievably, improved upon.”<sup>162</sup> The massive energy of the band is further stimulated by Burdon’s enormous voice as he prances around the stage, gesticulating wildly to the crowd. In a perfect ending to the night, Simon and Garfunkel balanced the built-up emotional intensity of the Animals with the decompressing, high-pitched sweetness of their masterful harmonies. As one of the most prolific duos in the history of American pop rock, Simon and Garfunkel’s harmony is immaculate and poignant. Rivalled vocally only by the beautiful and complex harmonies of Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, Simon and Garfunkel’s whimsical “Feelin’ Groovy” is short and sweet, and leaves the audience saddened at its fleeting end. Through the footage, the viewer gets a sense that the duo’s gorgeous tune slowed the pounding hearts of the audience and left them feeling warm and comfortable, as if a fuzzy, psychedelic blanket had been draped over the crowd, coaxing them to get some sleep before it began all over again the next morning. Lydon brings imagery-rich closure to the night when he exclaims, “When the last note floated out around 1:30 A.M, the first night was over and the peace was extraordinary. There in the campgrounds with the sweet smell of pot drifting over sleeping bags, the music continued in singing and talking and in just being.”<sup>163</sup>

The first set of Saturday was structured on the blues: “In the bright hot sun of Saturday afternoon the serious blues shouting began.”<sup>164</sup> Beginning the set is Canned Heat, a blues-rock band fronted by the massive Bob Hite. While Hite enthusiastically belts out soulful lyrics with a relentless vigor, the band holds a fast twelve-bar rhythm and the uncharacteristically clean-cut guitarist tears apart a fine solo, flying around the frets with a bottleneck slide. Although the band consists of all-white members, their sound is reminiscent of the black musicians who created the genre, but were rarely acknowledged for their musical contributions. Their blues cover is upbeat and wonderfully energetic, and the camera switches between Hite, who dances around nimbly for his large size to the

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 27

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 27

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 28

pulse of the walking bass-line, and the audience, whose visceral reactions reveal that Canned Heat has captured their hearts.

Staying in the same vein of homegrown musicians like the LA based Canned Heat, Pennebaker's camera moves to the then locally successful Janis Joplin and her band Big Brother and the Holding Company. Like many other virtually unknown artists such as Jimi Hendrix and Otis Redding who appear on stage later in the weekend, Joplin's incredible performance at Monterey elevated her to superstardom. Undoubtedly one of the most significant performances in the concert, Joplin literally stole the show, exemplifying the liberating sound of rock 'n' roll with her profound vocal ability. The instruments provide a slow, mournful blues which Joplin enhances with the deeply affecting, sultry quality of her voice. Joplin screams into the microphone, seamlessly switching from high-pitched squeals to low, eloquent, bellowing—she is literally preaching the blues. As she does this, she seems to lose control of her body as she jerks and flails in eccentric gestures in a similar fashion to Joe Cocker's chilling vocals and insane gesticulations during his performance of "With a little help from my friends" at the Woodstock Festival two years later. Her stage presence is remarkable, and the camera catches her captivating presence as it pans out to the awestruck audience. Like the rest of the audience, Lydon was deeply affected by her performance: "In a gold knit pants suit with no bra underneath, Janis leapt, bent double, and screwed up her plain face as she sang like a demonic angel. It was the blues big-mama style, tough, raw, and gutsy, and with an aching that few singers reach. The group behind her drove her and fed from her. The final number, "Ball and Chain," which had Janis singing (singing?—talking, crying, moaning, howling) had the audience collectively on their feet. She is the best white blues singer I have ever heard."<sup>165</sup>

Instead of slowing the pace with a softer act, the audience is only further riled up when Country Joe and the Fish hop onstage, for although their fame was limited at that point, their combination of aggressive psychedelic-rock and a highly-politicized message were a potent mixture for success on a live stage. Just as with the Newport Jazz Festival, Monterey was the ideal medium

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 28

for artists to purvey a political attitude through the raw expression of rock music. Country Joe performed this task with expertise, beckoning a thoroughly liberal audience to join in on the protest against Vietnam and Cold War politics through the tunes “Please Don’t Drop that H-Bomb on Me, You Can Drop it on Yourself,” and of course their sardonically witty anthem “I Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-to-Die-Rag.” As Lydon observantly points out, in a festival built around the reverberating message of peace and love, Country Joe’s political-themed rock sing-alongs “were among the very few explicit protest songs at the festival; nowadays rock musicians are musicians first and protestors a slow second.”<sup>166</sup> Such a point reiterates the previously discussed notion that one of the features which made rock-culture unique is the fact that the liberal essence of the hippie culture was channeled into the equally liberating energy of rock music without needing to explicitly declare a political view. However, as Country Joe proved at Monterey, political music was an extremely productive method for unifying the crowd around an anti-war vision while still embodying the most basic role of the live-rock musician in 1967—exploring the expansive realm of psychedelic improvisation.

An illuminating interview between Lydon and Barry Melton, lead guitarist and lyricist for Country Joe, expands upon the pertinent themes of protest and psychedelia at Monterey while reinforcing the role of LSD as a fundamental building block of rock-culture’s “try-anything” ethic:

‘There are two parts to music,’ said Barry Melton, ‘the music and the lyrics. Music we have with everybody, but some say the lyrics shouldn’t be political. Everybody agrees with us on the war, but we feel that in this society, you have to make your stands clear. Others don’t want to speak up in songs, be right up front. That’s why we put politics in.’ Melton’s songs have been called ‘pure acid,’ but Melton says all music is psychedelic. ‘One part of LSD is liberation, do what you want to do. I feel I do that, do what I want to do. When I hear a sound that is groovy I use it. I try to find music all over the place. Listening to anything can give you musical ideas. That’s freedom, and maybe that’s psychedelic.’ He spoke for most of the groups: it would be hard to find any musician who has not taken LSD or at least smoked pot, but by now it has become so accepted that it’s nothing to be remarked on by itself. Acid opened minds to new images and new sounds, and made them embrace a wild eclecticism, but rather than being ‘acid’ as such, it has become music.<sup>167</sup>

In one short interview and subsequent musing by Lydon, the secrets of rock’s profound impact on advancement of the threshold of human creativity and its dual influence as a builder of cultural

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 28

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 29

consciousness and identity, has been incisively articulated. Barry Melton's language is not only eloquent, but also revelatory, providing insight into the hippie aesthetic and its endearing relationship with rock music while also espousing the revolutionary significance of Monterey as a fertile cultural development. Although Country Joe and the Fish had successfully established a powerful unity of purpose between themselves and the audience in celebrating the power of music as a facilitator of an alternative vision of society, the fun was not over yet. If stimulating the electric interconnectedness between musician and audience was considered the most vital and lasting contribution of Monterey to the future success of rock-culture, then the best was yet to come as the latter half of the festival was laden with awe-inspiring talent.

Unfortunately for the sake of maintaining a well-rounded equilibrium of styles during its short, seventy-eight minute glimpse of the festival, *Monterey Pop* fails to include any of the other, predominantly blues based bands from the Saturday afternoon set. Although Lydon seemed unimpressed with much of the big name talent of the second set such as Al Kooper, Quicksilver Messenger Service and the Steve Miller Band, one group caught his eye through the intriguing combination of raucous blues grooves and emotionally intense, improvisational prowess. This group was the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, described with reverence from Lydon as perhaps the most tightly orchestrated and richly experimental group of the day, who "more than any other, has led the revival of white interest in blues bands."<sup>168</sup> As announced by Lydon, "The band knew precisely what it was doing. They swung deftly on a broad emotional range, but my strongest memory is the haunting, looping sound of Butterfield's harmonica as it broke a small solo of just a few notes into tiny bits and experimented with their regroupings."<sup>169</sup> After listening to the band's set, it is clear why the author found the band so intriguing and musically complex, as their sound was so thoroughly steeped in a traditional Chicago blues style that, like Joplin, it seemed almost inconceivable that the band was comprised of all-white musicians. Moreover, Butterfield's soulful wailing is full-bodied and

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 29

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 29



guttural to the point where he actually resembles the voice of the blues legend whose music he covered at Monterey—none other than the growling Muddy Waters. If the Paul Butterfield Blues Band was to symbolize one authentic characteristic of rock-culture, it would be the lasting success of its many musicians' ability to intermix a variety of genres into one innovative, super-fusion of modern rock sound.

After an incredible afternoon of blues, the Saturday night set was faced with a significant challenge to maintain the wild energy set free into the air by the likes of Country Joe and Paul Butterfield. Although performances from groups like the Byrds and Hugh Masekela, a South African trumpeter were enjoyable, they were not up to par with the energy of the blues artists of the afternoon. This changed quickly as the final three groups of the night generated all the cosmic energy necessary to make Monterey an unforgettable experience for all. Through Pennebaker's camera one begins to see the appearance of a trippy backdrop materializing on the stage's enormous projector after a brief panoramic view of the venue shows an audience eagerly awaiting which faces will be matched with the swirling psychedelic mushrooms on the screen. Who else could it be but Jefferson Airplane, one of the most beloved psychedelic groups of the San Francisco scene. The band starts off with "High Flying Bird," a drug innuendo which is amplified by the melting colors and shapes on the projector, a perfectly tight rock groove and the complementary harmonies of Marty Balin and Grace Slick. The demure, flowing clothing and good looks of Slick are startlingly deceiving, as her commanding vocal presence is almost intimidating, suddenly switching from quivering, high-pitched screams to a booming baritone drone—all with a sweeping bravado. Complementing their natural musical talent was an even more natural embodiment of the hippie aesthetic, typified by their ragged, colorful clothing, nonchalant attitudes and lyrics that were thematically symbolic of the concert's vivacious motto- "Music, peace, flowers and love." In Lydon's mind, the band's success lay in their ability to enhance the psychedelic experience through the music: "In the final song they surpassed themselves, playing largely in the dark, the light show looming above them, its multicolored blobs shaping and

reshaping, primeval molecules eating up tiny bubbles like food then splitting into shimmering atoms. The guitar sounds came from outer space and inner mind.”<sup>170</sup>

A quick set by the blues-rock group Booker T. & the MGs and their signature electrified-organ led sound kept the energy up and the audience moving for undoubtedly the most riveting and wildly theatrical artist of the night—Otis Redding and his slick combination of soul, funk, and r & b. Although Redding was well known around the country to African-American audiences, the black musician’s performance at Monterey was his first major appearance in front of a predominantly white audience. Within only a few seconds of his start, the musician, clad in a bright green suit, had enraptured the audience with a voice so profoundly moving and a stage presence so immense that it seemed the man had descended from another universe—perhaps the same dream world which spawned *Sgt Pepper’s* otherworldly sound. Lydon reveals that the tremors of Redding’s earth-shattering performance were felt throughout the crowd—“‘Shake,’ he shouted, ‘shake, everybody, shake,’ shaking himself like a madman in his electric green suit. What was it like? I wrote at the time, ‘ecstasy, madness, loss, total, screaming, fantastic.’ He closed with ‘Try a Little Tenderness,’ and by the end his performance reached a new orgiastic pitch. A standing, screaming crowd brought him back and back and back.”<sup>171</sup> In a matter of minutes, Redding had gone from an unknown soul singer to a beloved icon of the hippie celebration, all while transcending the barriers of race and foreign music style. What his performance proved is that Monterey and its hippie audience were truly as accommodating in person as they were in speeches or on paper, happy to embrace a musician who shared the common trait of living passionately in the unbridled present. Redding, through his preternatural vocal ability, soulful stylizations, and physical swagger exemplified the two great feats of Monterey and the ultimate reasons why it spawned the beginning of the festival era rather than the abrupt end: the development of rock’s symbiotic relationship between musician and audience and the

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 31

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 31

festival's unexpected success in triggering the ascension of previously unknown artists to superstardom.

Saturday night lived up to everything it had promised and more, leaving the mesmerized crowd to ponder the “lavish daydream” that had just occurred: “Could anyone believe what had happened, what might happen? Hours of noise had both deafened and opened thousands of minds. One had lived in sound for hours: the ears had come to dominate the senses. Ears rang as one slept; dreams were audible as well as visual.”<sup>172</sup> It seemed like a just fate that the deafening music of the prior night's momentous set had continued to ring ceaselessly in the ears of the exhausted audience well into the subconscious state of their restless dreams. In the grander scheme of things, sleep was wholly overrated, as Sunday's double set would prove to be the most incredible finale anyone could have asked for. Certainly the most diverse group of names yet, the set list included locals like Buffalo Springfield and the Grateful Dead, relatively unknown rockers like the Who and the Jimi Hendrix Experience, and the man who in many ways made *Sgt. Pepper's* a psychedelic staple—Ravi Shankar. Although nobody truly understood up to the early morning of Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, the previous day's set list was truly unfair to even the most established names on the lineup; for while the final day of Monterey was considered a perfectly fitting conclusion to a memorable weekend, two names in particular would unanimously steal the show.

Kicking off the afternoon set in what would turn out to be a performance lasting over three hours was Ravi Shankar and his full band of classically-trained Indian musicians. Although raga-rock had exploded onto the music scene after the release of *Sgt. Peppers*, the creative energy of Shankar's spiritually robust sitar music was a phenomenon which had never been seen live before by the young audience. Shankar had a lot to prove: not only did the audience not really know what to expect from the foreign-sounding raga style, but Shankar's group was literally the only act of the afternoon and would serve as an indication of audience sentiment going into the final and most crucial set. In the most pious and respectful fashion possible, Shankar and his group took Monterey by storm, raising

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 31

the performance bar for ensuing groups to an unprecedented high. As Shankar held the audience in a hypnotic and reverent trance for over three hours, he maintained an incredibly ethereal stage-presence. Shankar exuded both quiet confidence and supernatural energy, as if he were a sagacious spiritual guide descended from the heavens to give Monterey his musical elixir of life—raga.

Interestingly, Pennebaker chose to display Shankar's song as the final cut of the film although it was far from the end of the actual concert. The most obvious reason for Pennebaker's decision is that an accurate and full-bodied musical portrait would not have been complete without at least one of Shankar's incredibly introspective and spacious raga improvisations. The cinematic technique was a masterful way of concluding the film with a foreign music which metaphorically exuded peace, love, and flowers, bringing a forth a sense of a profound spirituality. In a way, Shankar's performance was a musical catharsis, ridding the audience of any burdensome excesses remaining from the partying and the rock music of the previous night. Pennebaker took advantage of the ceaseless pulse of the various instruments by switching the camera from close ups of the hands of the various musicians, capturing the incredible technical prowess with their respective instruments, and then panning out to shots of the entranced crowd who seems to be collectively undergoing a musical enlightenment. Although the classical raga was technically and aesthetically the polar opposite of the electrified acid-rock, when analyzed carefully, the two styles are comprised of the same essential element of improvisational exploration.

During the performance, the camera zooms in on various scenes such as a woman's pet monkey with the word "love" spray-painted on its forehead. This wonderfully bizarre yet hopeful image is one that could only have been conceived during the Summer of Love. The one continuous song ebbs and flows, seamlessly moving from Shankar's meticulously picked sitar and the soft accompaniment of tabla drums to a feverishly paced and spontaneous group improvisation. In stimulating fashion that tantalizes one's sense of musical time and spatiality, the song moves instantaneously from weightiness to weightlessness as the various instruments jump in and out of the projected soundscape. Lydon's own section on Shankar exudes deep respect and wonder for this guru

of the East: “There was an excitement in his purity, as well as in his face and body, and that of a tabla player whose face matched Charlie Chaplin’s in its expressive range. For three hours they played music, and after the first strangeness, it was not Indian music, but *music*, a particular realization of what music could be.”<sup>173</sup> Lydon’s eloquent language evokes the recurring theme that rock-culture was unique in its ability to deconstruct genre-based limitations while channeling a plethora of diverse sounds into one universal musical language. It is impossible to describe the impact of Shankar’s performance in mere words, for words simply can’t do justice to the musician’s multi-dimensional sound. The combination of talent and spirituality of Shankar and his group transcends the boundaries of music; Shankar is sublime—the spiritual ecstasy he produces in the form of music is symbolic of the euphoria one must experience when achieving nirvana.

The relationship between performer and audience reaches its pinnacle as Shankar plucks madly away at the twenty-three strings of his sitar. Pennebaker’s camera pans the audience—if one is with eyes closed, deep in prayer or deep in hallucinogenic trance, another is gawking and bug-eyed, staring at this Indian Brahman. Shankar impresses musical revelation upon the masses in a humble fashion, as he sits cross-legged, in a simple white robe with bare feet exposed for the entirety of the performance—theatrics are unnecessary to enhance the musician’s stage presence. In a seamless written conclusion to this profound musical event, Lydon muses on Shankar’s pure embodiment of musical genius while demonstrating the universality of love and the language of music through Shankar’s own touching words:

It was all brilliant, but in a long solo from the sixteenth century Shankar had the whole audience, including all the musicians at the festival, rapt. Before he played, he spoke briefly. The work, he said, was a very spiritual one and he asked that no pictures be taken (the paparazzi lay down like lambs). He thanked everyone for not smoking, and said with feeling, ‘I love all of you, and how grateful I am for your love of me. What am I doing at a pop festival when my music is classical? I knew I’d be meeting you all at one place, you to whom music means so much. This is not pop but I am glad it is popular.’ With that he began the long melancholic piece. To all appearances he had seven thousand people with him, and when he finished, he stood, bowed with his hands clasped to his forehead, and then, smiling, threw back to the crowd the flowers that had been showered on him.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 31

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 32

It was more than simply a daunting task to step on stage after Shankar's three-hour musical epiphany, and while many groups played their hearts out Sunday night, three showed great talent while only one could truly compete with the raga star's legendary performance.

For anyone who had the good fortune of attending Monterey or even being present in Haight-Ashbury during the Summer of Love, it must be truly disheartening to see that the Grateful Dead, the most committed and prolific group to grace the San Francisco scene between 1965-67 did not make the final cut for Pennebaker's documentary. If Michael Lydon had known that the group was not be showcased on the film, he would have been apoplectic, for on Sunday night, the Dead did what they always did, but in greatly expanded fashion—built a community through music. In deconstructing themselves, the audience and the music, the group could rebuild the world of Monterey through one unified vision of psychedelic experimentation while transcending time, space, and reason. As Lydon exclaimed, "I have never heard anything in music that could be said to be qualitatively better than the performance of the Dead Sunday night. The Dead's songs lasted twenty minutes and more, each a masterpiece of five-man improvisation. They built a driving, unshakable rhythm that acted not just as rhythm, but as a wall of noise on which the solos were etched."<sup>175</sup> The group had such complete control of the audience that the music seemed to have cast a hippie voodoo dance spell, leaving the crowd blissfully helpless and susceptible to follow, with their bodies, any change of rhythm or slight movement by the band. The band's cosmic control of the audience became so overwhelming that the security had to restrain the massive dance party and the many spontaneous instances of acid-induced "holy rolling." In ironically hilarious fashion, the Dead, who thrived on this physical response from the crowd, feared that the forced restraint of the crowd was indicative of a mediocre performance when bassist Phil Lesh exclaimed, "Man it was impossible to know how we were doing without seeing people moving. We feed on that, we need it, but, oh man, we did our thing, we did our thing."<sup>176</sup> On the contrary, their music elicited the opposite response, as the Dead's stellar set once

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 35

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 35

again helped to solidify the overarching truth that Monterey was the ideal medium in which to build a unified community through the empowering musical vision of rock.

Next, Pennebaker focuses on the Who, a British rock band which was gaining popularity in the United States after its first extended tour. The band, known for its theatrical antics, exemplifies this stage volatility in their performance of “My Generation,” as Peter Townshend, the lead guitarist, spontaneously smashes his guitar to pieces to the shock and delight of the crowd. Never before had such a maniacal act of violence been seen let alone accepted and even praised. Yet with the evolution of rock ‘n’ roll came the evolution of stage presence in the form of sexuality and violence—self-expression in its most raw form. Townshend destroying his guitar is a symbolic act of rebellion against the system, and the oppressive standards of societal convention. The frenetic energy incited by Townshend’s deviant behavior and the positive reaction of the crowd spoke to the larger theme of rock ‘n’ roll as a vehicle of liberation—both spiritual and physical. Pennebaker’s filming captured this moment in all of its glory, allowing the symbolic relevance of Townshend’s provocative actions to remain crisp and real for later generations. Unfortunately for the group, their set preceded Jimi Hendrix, a largely unknown rock guitarist who, like Ravi Shankar, would push the boundaries of human creative expression and ascend to superstardom with his natural ability to capture the minds and souls of the audience. As the reality and legend of Monterey had almost immediately overshadowed the Magic Mountain Music Festival of early June, so too would Hendrix make the Who’s iconic performance seem like an insignificant filler act.

Regardless of fate, coincidence or the film editor’s guillotine, Monterey was simply not supposed to end with the mellifluous sound of spiritual resolution that spread throughout the crowd from Shankar’s sitar. As Lydon explains, “Sunday night the festival reached its only logical conclusion. The passion, anticipation, and adventure into sound had gone as far as any could have thought possible, and yet it had to go further. Flowers and a groovy kind of love may be elements in the hippie world, but they have little place in hippie rock. In their music there is a feeling of stringent demand on the senses, an experimenting with the techniques of assault, a toying with the idea of

beautiful ugliness, the creativeness of destruction, and the loss of the self into whatever may come.”<sup>177</sup> Combine this extended metaphor of “creative destruction” with amplified electric guitar feedback, “a technique which can increase a group’s volume, produce yelps, squeals, screams, pitches that rise and rise, that squeak, blare or yodel wildly,” and you had Jimi Hendrix in all his glory. Immediately as Pennebaker’s camera zooms in on the man, one feels an otherworldly presence, similar to the aura of Shankar and Redding. Hendrix was dressed in what can be considered the quintessence of hippie clothing, complete with a ruffled yellow tunic, tight red velvet pants, and a purple bandana, presumably laced with acid. Introduced by Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones as “The most exciting guitar player I’ve ever heard,” Hendrix surpassed all expectations with remarkable ease.

His natural ability to initially awe then capture the love and respect of the audience was astonishing. Hendrix’s raw talent and unorthodox playing style simply defied reasoning; as Pennebaker masterfully portrays, his performance of “Wild Thing” was pure genius and instantaneously elevated him to legendary status. Even the most established guitarists were left dumbfounded by Hendrix’s technical ability—it seemed as if the instrument were an extension of his body. The song begins with Hendrix holding his guitar upside down, close to his face, as he squeezed the whammy bar to produce dissonant, sustained feedback. Lydon’s own lyrical prose developed a wonderfully descriptive image of the chaotic scene: “He played his guitar left-handed, if in Hendrix’s hands it was still a guitar. It was, in symbolic fact, a weapon that he brandished, his own penis that he paraded before the crowd and masturbated; it was a woman whom he made love to by straddling and by eating it while playing the strings with his teeth, and in the end it was a torch that he destroyed.”<sup>178</sup> For any other musician, this craft would be considered asinine; but this was Hendrix. With overtly sexual gestures, Hendrix lets his guitar provide feedback as he slams it against his gyrating hips. As he does this, he silently mumbles some incoherent words with a strained, pained facial expression which seems to be the vocal key behind his transportation to some parallel universe of music which

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 32

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 37



only he could channel. Hendrix was literally one with his guitar during the performance—at times he made love to it, at times he physically abused it.

Hendrix's visceral introduction was ravenously consumed by the crowd who very quickly signified their understanding that his stage presence and his music were on a plane which they had never before experienced. Everything that Hendrix gave to the audience at Monterey that magical night was defined by excess and the sweet, unique oxymorons which Lydon highlights as precise descriptors of rock's duality. Whether it was the excessive "beautiful ugliness" of his own physical appearance, the excessive "creativity of destruction" of his piercing solos and heavily distorted roars of guttural feedback, or the excessive "endearing assault" on his essential medium of self-expression, the guitar, in slashing the air before destroying it, Hendrix represented hippie excess in its most original and powerful state. Again, it is hard to capture the extent of Hendrix's talent with words; luckily, Pennebaker's film did that visually as did Lydon's own written process as he tried to make sense of Hendrix's performance—"How to describe it? I wrote at the time, 'end of everything...decay...nothing louder exists, 2,000 instruments...five tons of glass falling over a cliff and landing on dynamite.'"<sup>179</sup> Just as Kerouac's own writing style exemplified Beat stream-of-consciousness prose, Lydon's disconnected phrases of colorful description coalesce into one, experimental and ultimately definitive image which exemplifies the "try-anything" self-expression of the hippie aesthetic.

In a way, Lydon's writing perfectly complemented the explosive quality of Hendrix's own far-out musical vision. In order to outdo his actual musical virtuosity with a theatrical performance that would bring a pinnacle to the night's celebration, Hendrix ended "Wild Thing" and let the feedback of his final note build and build and build. Finally this pure, deafening volume fueled him with an animalistic rage that was certain to bring unparalleled closure to a performance which had singularly defined live-rock perfection. Although he had already far surpassed the absurdity of Townshend's earlier theatrics, Hendrix continued by wildly thrusting his guitar against the massive

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 36

Marshall stack amplifiers. This action created a cacophony of sound which could only be described as primal, like the screams of an animal being eviscerated by the blunt head of Hendrix's Fender Stratocaster. After attacking the amp, Hendrix descended to the stage floor, promiscuously riding his guitar while gesturing to the heavens with his long fingers. In conclusive fashion, he proceeded to pour lighter fluid on his guitar, set it aflame, and smash it to pieces in a modern-day shamanistic ceremony to the gods of music. As Lydon saw it, the act of destruction, while being directly influenced by the long history of outlandish rock front-men, transcended any conceivable link to these rock stars of the past:

The act became more than an extension of Elvis's gyrations, it became an extension of that to infinity, an orgy of noise so wound up that I feared the dynamo that powered it would fail and fission into its primordial atomic state. Hendrix did not only pick up the strings, he bashed them with the flat of his hand, and he ripped at them, rubbed them against the mike, and pushed them with his groin into the amplifier. And when he knelt before the guitar as if it were a victim to be sacrificed, sprayed it with lighter fluid, and ignited it, it was exactly a sacrifice: the offering of the perfect, most beloved thing, so its destruction could ennoble him further.<sup>180</sup>

Just like that it was over--the scene ended with the camera panning out to the entranced crowd who seemed to be equally appalled and elated by Hendrix's life-changing performance. In a flash, a climax had been reached; its implications so vast that when Hendrix had departed the stage for the last time, nobody seemed to fully comprehend the enormity of the event which had just taken place. Indeed, all these many years later, those who were there and those who weren't continue to struggle to describe, define and process the majesty of that performance and its impact on the collective rock consciousness. Interestingly enough, Scott McKenzie's "If You're Going to San Francisco," the song which begins Pennebaker's film and helps to build the vibe of a special coming-together, is actually the swan-song of the entire festival. The purpose of ending with the unofficial anthem of the Summer of Love is ambiguous: perhaps it was simply to bring the intensity of Hendrix's flaming guitar encore back down to a manageable level or maybe, in the words of Attali, "it was the herald of things to come."

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 37

## **Conclusion: The legacy of rock-culture in 1967 and onward**

Despite the success of Monterey in establishing a justifiable and extremely meaningful identity for its faithful rock-culture, the most basic element of rock-culture, its spontaneity remained as volatile as ever, constantly teetering on the precipice of ideological oblivion due to the inherent “unknowns” of a “live in the present attitude.” As Lydon objectively stated days after the conclusion of the festival, Monterey proved five things about rock-culture: 1. Pop-rock was still in a continuum with the blues, and still finds most of its influences in the staple genre 2. LSD and psychedelia tremendously broadened the minds of both the hippies and those musicians who found themselves on the stage 3. The Beatles still contained huge influence over the rock scene and their own shift away from folk catalyzed a larger, cultural shift away from the genre 4. The shift from folk to rock is based on a will to experiment and the sense of experiment is what will allow rock to continue to prosper and evolve 5. Most importantly, the environment of Monterey spawned the creation of a vital community- “Rock musicians, whatever their bag, came together, heard each other, praised each other, and saw that the scene was open enough for them to play as they liked and still get an audience. They will return to their own scenes refreshed and confident. The whole hippie-rock scene was vindicated.”<sup>181</sup> What Lydon saw is that Monterey accomplished its fundamental objectives of bringing together, and advancing all of the diverse sounds under the rock umbrella and successfully being the home of an organic and robust community which formed for the simple purpose of celebrating the alternative, artistic, and peaceful vision of the hippie aesthetic. Thus, in only two prolific years, a developing music and a developing lifestyle had fused into hippie-rock, a productive countercultural movement which utilized artistic self-expression as a means of conscientious objection. This revision of the “American Experience” was as plentiful in its vast resources of musical innovation as it was hopeful in its will to incite ideological change to a nation rife with socio-political inconsistencies.

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 38

Rock artists like Jimi Hendrix and Country Joe and the Fish demonstrated that music was perhaps the most efficient method of building a community who shared the collective will to live in the present and fight off conservative mores with love, respect, and artistic drive. If anything, such a powerful combination of virtues proved to a cynical America the countercultural forces behind this movement were free-thinking, motivated human beings, not just dirty, self-indulgent dropouts whose “terms are attractive, yet appear to be style without content.”<sup>182</sup> As the hippies truly believed, 1967 was a magical window in time where necessary changes in the obsolete socio-political structure of American popular culture could be facilitated if enough youthful minds trusted in the inherent power of goodness and community. Stemming from the success of Monterey and the positive feedback from national media sources, the hippie vision temporarily transcended its inherent limitations as a minority movement and provoked a conservative nation to think twice about their unwavering stronghold on the precisely manufactured “American Experience” they contentedly enjoyed.

In retrospect, Scott McKenzie’s “San Francisco,” the farewell song of Monterey, proved to serve its latter-mentioned purpose of acting as a musical prophecy, marking the end of one era and the beginning of another. Unfortunately, the “present-tense” hippie lifestyle of spontaneity and relative excesses would be irrevocably pushed over the ideological threshold from free-flowing liberal values and freedoms to pure anarchy as July came along in Haight-Ashbury. What was once a relatively unknown bohemian culture built around a respectful attitude towards art, community, and the near-sacred ritualistic experience of consuming LSD would be lost in translation of a unique lifestyle that simply did not translate to the ideological convolution representative of mass culture. Harkening back to the analogy of the 1960s Yin-Yang duality of a peaceful, weightless and authentic cultural vision and the inevitable backlash of mass culture’s burdensome consumption of liberal thought, one can see how the summer was an involuntary test of Tribe’s original prophecy. In the end, the Tribe’s creed of “The gates are open” may have been the hippies’ collective Achilles’ heel, as the kind gesture was accepted *en masse*. Sadly, only the music would prove immune to the moral decay of the summer’s

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<sup>182</sup> *The Hippie Temptation*

onslaught of yang, as the will of a naïve and largely disrespectful summer population in Haight-Ashbury to consume what they saw as pleasures of “the flesh,” was totally incompatible with the virtuous nature of hippie ideology. In a matter of months, this ideology had been consumed and in its place came the consequences of a fragile cultural vision being applied to a mass-audience.

The treasured secret of the hippie aesthetic had fallen victim to its own excesses, resulting in the literal transformation from a hopeful vision of an alternative, utopian society to a corrupt lifestyle of greed, abuse and malevolence. By early August, the once-harmonious environment of Haight-Ashbury had become completely overrun with visitors who had no purpose of involving themselves in the common good of the hippie vision. As the narrator of *The Summer of Love* laments, “By August the mass of summer residents had reached one-hundred thousand. Haight-Ashbury had become an unpleasant place to live—a circus and a caricature of its original vision. People took on hippie personas for the summer. The strain of mysticism can only work in small groups. Attitudes were getting tough and people were there just for the drugs, not for the idyllic vision of change.”<sup>183</sup> With the population bulge came an increased friction between the hippie youths and the longtime residents of the neighborhood who had finally had enough of the Summer of Love and the rising tides of civil unrest and disrespect. An interview with an older woman and Haight-Ashbury resident sheds light upon the notion that the hippie aesthetic and its will for change was coming to a rapid decline, “I don’t like their morals. I don’t like the example they’re setting. I don’t like their filth. I don’t like the words they use.”<sup>184</sup>

The general view of the hippies had become so negative that in August, a sightseeing company started running a bus down Haight-Ashbury where tourists were provided with a pamphlet entitled “The only foreign tour in the domestic US,” revealing that the once flourishing counterculture had regressed to the level of animals. Drugs, homelessness, and greed rattled the neighborhood to its core, and by October 6<sup>th</sup>, “A group of hippies closed the curtain on the Summer of Love, staging a

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<sup>183</sup> *The Summer of Love*

<sup>184</sup> Ibid

mock funeral called the ‘Death of the Hippie.’”<sup>185</sup> The day brought proper symbolic closure to a phenomenon which had well-outlived its own cultural relevance. However, one aspect remained unfettered by the moral corruption of the summer—the malleable, and spontaneous will of artistic self-expression which had been the vital catalyst in the marriage of rock music and hippie culture two years prior. Thus while the latter half of the Summer of Love marked the demise of a promising yet evanescent countercultural phenomenon, the fertile offspring of that phenomenon—Monterey—marked the bright future of rock’s live integration into the era of the outdoor festival.

It takes only a basic understanding of rock’s early evolution to notice that it was irrevocably shaped (for better or for worse) by the legendary musicians who unconsciously surface in one’s mind with the utterance of the word rock. From Elvis Presley to Bill Haley to the Beatles and Dylan, rock’s first fifteen years were built from the ground up by the four *white* faces who inadvertently destroyed the careers of aspiring rockers, both black and white, who had no chance to compete with the tastes of popular culture. Of course these musicians were integral to the continued success and innovation of the genre, but the cold, hard fact that Monterey’s set list was almost perfectly split between artists new and old, local and international seemed to be too equanimous in selection to be a mere coincidence. Whether deliberate or not, the mere existence of such a precise equilibrium of talent exemplified Monterey’s embodiment of the hippies’ emphasis on a level “human playing field” and their staunch aversion to the moral corruption of power games. In the grander scheme of rock-culture, this simple idea of creating a mass-scale, level playing field at Monterey hinted at another profound change in rock; instead of the traditional process of musical growth being spearheaded by the inherent limitations of one or two artist’s creative visions, the “spokesperson of change” analogy was now transformed into the infinitely more prolific “collective” voice of change.

Rock-culture’s short-lived yet blissful pinnacle during the late 1960s was unlike any Avant-Garde movement before or after because of its seamless fusion of prolific musical vision with an equally productive culture who utilized rock’s free-spirited energy as a revolutionary medium of re-

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid

envisioning the long-convoluted “American experience.” Whether it was the hippies’ cultural “push towards creativity and social pluralism” the movement’s natural capacity to “bridge gender, race, and class boundaries,” the civil rights struggle and anti-war sentiment or the proliferation of diverse musical sub-genres under one inclusive roof, rock ‘n’ roll was the medium through which it was all applied.<sup>186</sup> As America would soon find out, the incredible success of Monterey Pop would allow it to become the proud foremother of the two legendary rock festivals of the 1960s. The audacious introduction of relative artistic equality at Monterey would continue to be wholly incompatible with the capitalist-oriented structure of the music industry, yet its effect would be invaluable to the future of rock’s greatest live era, directly influencing the composition of both Woodstock and Altamont. Such a subtle innovation is often forgotten in the decadence and celebratory nature of the rock festival era, yet its application was of fundamental importance in the overall success of the iconic festivals of 1969. With all good things, however, comes an end to the fun.

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1969, at the Altamont Speedway Free Festival, a black man named Meredith Hunter was brutally murdered by a group of disgruntled Hell’s Angels just feet from the stage where the Rolling Stone’s were performing the tune “Under My Thumb.” The murder changed everything. In retrospect, that one moment marked the symbolic end to rock-culture’s glorious era when the outdoor festival had encompassed the virtues and celebratory essence of the hippies’ alternative vision of America. The new decade was almost immediately tainted with this turn towards violence, for only five months after Altamont, the murders at Kent State University on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1970, rattled any remaining glimpse of the hippies’ beloved peace-loving vision. As musicologist Bruce Pollock exclaimed, these two moments of internal conflict marked the demise of a hopeful dream:

It was the end of the Beatles, the end of Woodstock Nation, the end of the Greenwich Village folk scene. ‘The Bus’ went into the shop permanently. In San Francisco, Bill Graham got out of the Fillmore business, the Airplane became the Starship, the Dead incorporated. Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison reached the end of the road. As Dave Van Ronk told me, ‘The check was not in the mail.’ As Tom Wolfe quoted Ken Kesey as saying, ‘We blew it.’ And as Monkee Peter Tork said, ‘When they shot them down at Kent State that was the end of the Flower Power era. That was it. You just throw your flowers and rocks at us, man, and we’ll just pull the guns on you. Essentially, the

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<sup>186</sup> Hamilton, *Counterculture in America*, 197

revolution, which was sort of tolerated as long as it wasn't a significant material threat, was not tolerated any more. And everybody went 'oops' and scurried for cover and licked their wounds. They became isolated, which was the point of it all. Because the less togetherness there is, the more room there is for exploitation.<sup>187</sup>

Thus by the turn of the decade, the exuberant lifestyle and hopeful ideology of the hippies and their Flower Power had gone awry. Nonetheless, the spirit, hope, and aspiration of a generation had temporarily come together in a movement whose creative energy, in the form of rock music, had outlasted the lifestyle of those volatile hippies. America can thank Monterey for that, as she fought off tradition, expectation and financial desires to successfully put together the quintessence of rock's far-reaching umbrella of talent. If the Summer of Love is the story of a generation "boarding the bus" to a reimagined America, then Monterey International Pop Festival is the seminal musical event which forever cemented rock 'n' roll as the music of cultural revolution. As Robert Lydon exclaims, "The Monterey International Pop Festival was a dream come true. An odd, baffling, and at times threatening dream, but one whose main theme was the creation and further growth of rock 'n' roll music, a music as young, vital, and beautiful as any being made today."<sup>188</sup> Monterey Pop was truly a dream come true; for three days, an eclectic mixture of music, politics and people, cops included, had formed a community. Biases were forgotten as the music transcended socio-cultural boundaries and brought the people together. Temporarily at least, a universal sense of peace had been achieved; and while it was over so quickly, Monterey's "love and flowers and music" theme would be channeled into the penultimate Woodstock, and the conclusive Altamont. Was Monterey Pop the greatest American rock festival? That is up for debate--but as Lydon explains, "Many of Monterey's offspring much outgrew their mother, but none had her tentative innocence, her blushing first-time exuberance."<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Pollock, *Time we got to Woodstock*, 282

<sup>188</sup> Lydon, "Monterey Pops," 38

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 38



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